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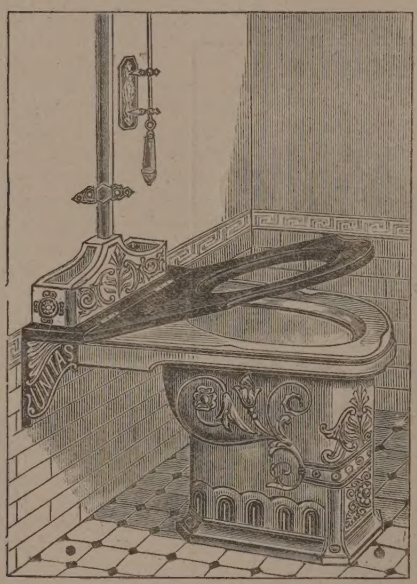

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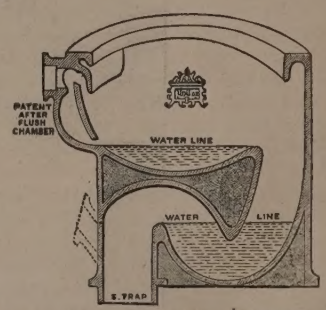

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EDITED BY

DR. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E., &c.

LONDON: *FRIDAY, DECEMBER* 14, 1888.

The Editor of HEALTH *wishes his readers "the Compliments of the Season," and expresses the hope that good health and happiness may attend them during the coming year.*

A SEASIDE HORROR.

By Justin Huntly McCarthy, M.P.

Mr. Jossellin stood and looked at the sea. It was early, very early for Brighton—not yet half-past seven, in fact. Jossellin—a New York lawyer, on his annual European holiday—was an early riser wherever he found himself. He had risen betimes, taken his tub, ordered his breakfast, and had stepped out for a preliminary stroll and the purchase of the morning papers.

Almost opposite East Street, a stone pier, as it may perhaps be called, runs across the shingly beach out into the sea. Mr. Jossellin walked on to this pier, and lounged slowly down to the end of it, where a succession of long steps went down, deeper and deeper, into the still water. There was nobody else on the pier. For the moment, Mr. Jossellin felt as if there was nobody else in the world. Brighton, at his back, was hardly awake; only here and there were a few of the shops along the front slowly opening their sleepy shutters. Along the beach, a few fishermen were disposing their wares in baskets and barrows. Here and there, at intervals, individuals, habited chiefly in flannel-trousers and bath-towels, made their way from different points of the compass to take a dip in the sea. In front, the sea stretched out a grey waste, to the waste of grey sky beyond. It was very curious weather, Mr. Jossellin thought to himself. The year had been bad and bitter: the summer a mere mockery, wet, and cold, and windy. Now, in the late autumn, it almost seemed as if a repentant summer had turned upon his heel just as he was about to say good-bye to the world, and had entered the house of the year again. Brighton had suddenly found itself plunged into an almost tropical climate. Every day the air was steeped in an intense, quivering, golden heat; every day the sea lay tranquil, as deeply blue, as serenely shining, as those Sicilian waters through which the fisher-folk of Theocritus chased the darting tunny. Every day the sky, a faultless vault of azure, gave Brighton the aspect of South Italian Baiæ. Every day the sun sank to his rest in a magnificent pageant, lighting up the waning heavens with great floods of crimson conflagration, till the west appeared indeed a very Rägnarök, a battle-ground of Titanic gods.

It was not satisfactory to Mr. Jossellin as he stood there on the pier-end looking at the grey light which lay over everything and that invariably ushered in each day's fiery heat, as if the weather were some strange Eastern beauty who must enter muffled in impenetrable silken veils to be suddenly thrown aside and disclose her vivid Oriental beauty. The year seemed to him to be out of gear somehow, in all this late heritage of light, and heat, and gorgeous colour. I should think, he said to himself, that this sudden tidal wave of heat, acting upon blood cooled and torpid from long months of peaked spring and changeling summer, must have some strange, unnatural effect upon the temperament. Now is the moment for some of those strange abberations which seem to take possession of men's minds from time to time, and create either some fanatic burst of religious mania or an epidemic of crime. Which is it to be now, he asked the grey morning: a new Salvation Army, all noise and holiness, or some new phase in the murder-madness, which at times seems to rage like fever in human society. As Mr. Jossellin formulated these philosophic searchings in his own mind, he glanced out over the grey water, as if he expected to find some answer on its shining surface.

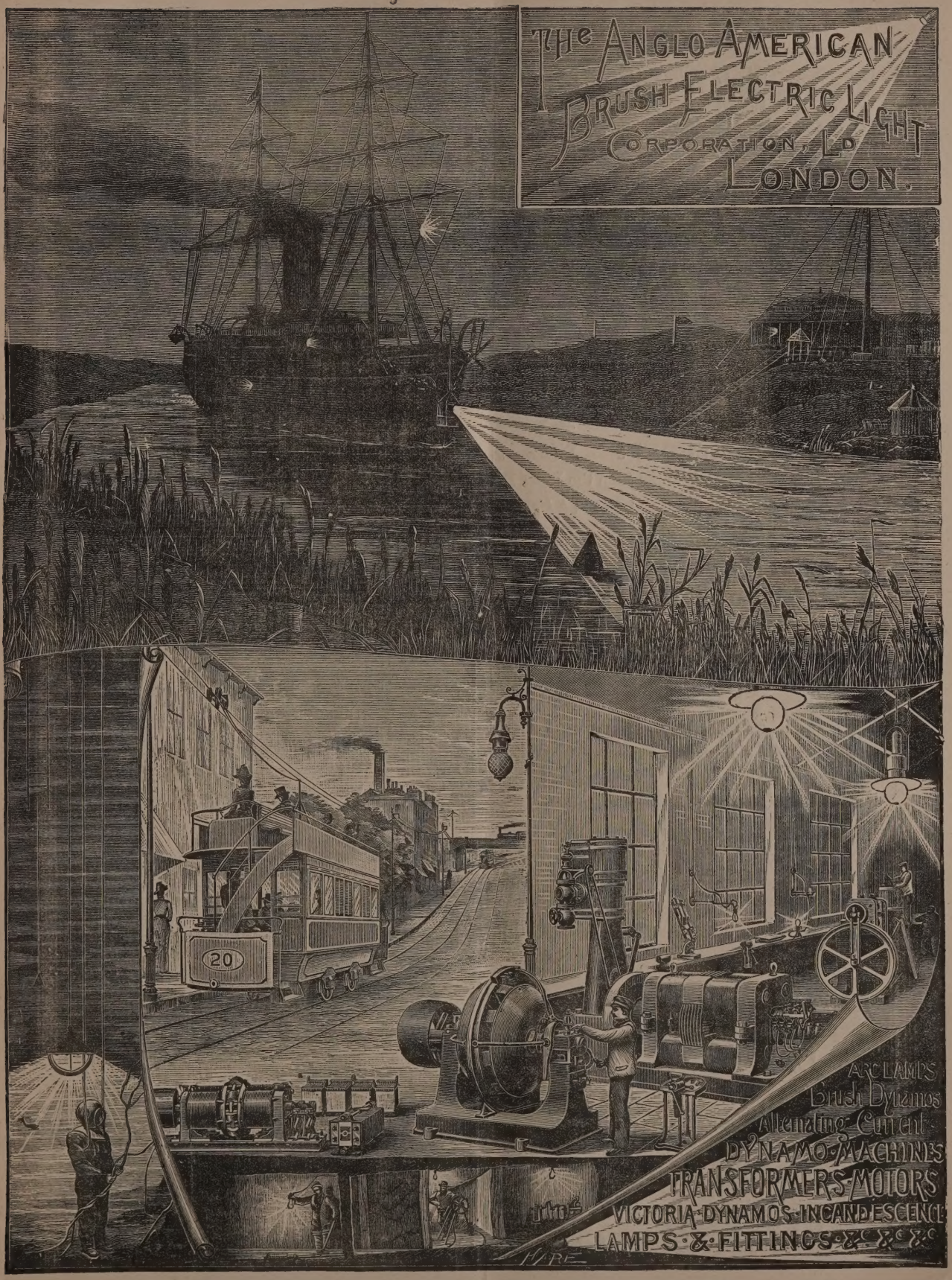
Mr. Jossellin often wondered afterwards if unconscious sight of some object present to the retina, but as yet not distinctly visible to the reasoning faculty, could spur the mind, as it were, unawares, with some sudden and unexpected line of thought. For Mr. Jossellin had looked at the grey waste of sea and sky for some seconds while he was meditating upon his puzzle as to the relationship between a belated summer and a generally unhinged mental condition in mankind at large, before he grew really conscious that he was looking at anything in particular. But quite suddenly he became aware that his eyes were fixed upon a particular object. That object was simply an open boat, that was floating upon the surface of the sea perhaps a quarter of a mile from where the first foam of the incoming tide was lipping up over the shining shingle. At first Mr. Jossellin did not clearly understand why it was that his eyes regarded so intently this same boat. Perhaps because it was the only object that lay between him and the dim horizon. To his right, some way removed, a little fleet of some dozen fishing-boats lay at anchor. To the left, far as eye could reach, nothing broke the desert tranquillity of the silver ocean. Mr. Jossellin had not noticed the boat before, but that was no particular reason why he should notice it now. Yet he was noticing it, and suddenly his wonder quickened, as a smouldering fire quickens, and leaped into knowledge. He was noticing the boat because the boat was drifting, was floating lazily upon the tranquil water without any guidance. No sail was set, no oars were visible. An empty boat, Mr. Jossellin admitted to himself; probably some pleasure-boat—some accident. But no, this was not likely; the weather had been so strangely fine, the sea so smooth, the poorest oarsman in the world could hardly have managed an accident under such conditions. Besides, it seemed to Mr. Jossellin's keen sight, as the boat slowly drifted nearer, side on, that it held some occupant. Mr. Jossellin's mind reverted to Rousseau and his delight, as he records in his *Confessions*, in lying on his back in a boat on the little lake of Biene and letting the boat drift where it would, while he stared at the sky. Perhaps some one imitating Rousseau's mania on a larger scale, Mr. Jossellin said to himself, as he rose to his feet to turn backwards to his hotel. Still somehow his eyes kept fixed upon the boat, and, instead of turning back, he walked slowly forward to the very end of the pier, and descended the stone steps till he reached that against which the waves were washing. The boat had an occupant; Mr. Jossellin was now sure of that. Somebody seemed to be lying down in it, somebody who seemed to be clad in bright garments, for Mr. Jossellin's keen sight was pleased by an impression of vivid colour. Slowly the boat drifted nearer and nearer, every sweep of the approaching tide swinging it lazily

forward. Slowly Mr. Jossellin's eyes became more impressed by a consciousness of vivid colour connected with the individual in the boat, conscious, too, of some suggestion of a curious deepness of hue about the portion of the inner part of the boat visible to him as it lightly rocked on the advancing waves. Mr. Jossellin, fairly overmastered by a wholly unreasonable curiosity, stayed and stared, straining his sight, as the boat drifted nearer and nearer, to make out exactly the nature of its mysterious freight.

A longer wash of the waves suddenly swung the boat much closer to the pier: only a very few yards lay between the two, and Mr. Jossellin saw, to his intense amazement that the boat was occupied by a woman. She seemed to be lying down, somewhat to the stern, with her head resting near the tiller. She was lying quite still, as if asleep. This was surprising enough; but there were more surprises for Mr. Jossellin. The first startling fact that impressed itself upon his observant consciousness was that the recumbent woman was dressed in the gaudy many-coloured garb of the Roman peasant-woman, or rather in the garb which the Roman peasant-woman assumes when she travels to other lands in search of gold. The next fact which asserted itself was that the inner side of the boat, and much of the gay dress of the woman, seemed to be smeared with some dark substance, which at the first glance looked like brown paint. Only at the first glance, however. The boat was now quite close to the pier-head; only a few feet of water lay between its side and the lowest of the stone steps; and Mr. Jossellin's practised eye knew in one startled second what the brown stains were—blood; nothing but blood! The boat was all smeared, and soaked, and stained by it, like a floating shambles. So much Mr. Jossellin was able to appreciate in one horrified second, as the boat grated against the lowest of the stone steps. It paused there for a moment, bruising its side against the sharp edge of the stone, and in that moment Mr. Jossellin felt as if he had lived for a century. He seemed to have gazed for more than a man's lifetime upon that dabbled hull and upon its ghastly freight, that gaily-clad young girl, whose clothes seemed to be saturated with blood, and whose set pale face was staring up so horridly at the sky. The girl had been dead some time: Mr. Jossellin could tell that at a glance by the livid hue of the flesh, by the hideous rigidity of the features. The face had been a face of striking beauty—he could note so much even in that brief space, which seemed so endless—but it was now so writhed and twisted by pain and terror, that it was deformed out of all loveliness. Silent, speechless with horror, Mr. Jossellin stood there with clenched hands, staring at the blood-smirched wood and the marred body, while the boat still swayed gently against the stone, rubbing itself, so it seemed to Mr. Jossellin's excited mind, as a cat rubs itself against the human being whose attention it seeks to arouse. Mr. Jossellin could almost have fancied for one wild instant that the hideous boat was alive, and was lingering and mocking him with the display of its appalling burden. Mr. Jossellin seemed entranced, unable to move. He afterwards, when he came to analyze his own emotions, found that he felt that while the boat lingered there, drifting with a voluptuous horror against the pier, and rocking its mangled burden with ghastly softness, he could not stir from the spot, could not move a hand or raise his voice. But after the second which seemed a century, the boat, on the back-wash of a wave, drifted a little out to sea again, and then came slowly sailing inland again, but this time beyond the pier, and to the right of the startled spectator. As it drifted away, Mr. Jossellin recovered his presence of mind, his voice, and his power of motion. He ran down to the lowest step of the pier, letting the lazy waves wet him to his knees, in a vain effort to catch the boat by the gunwale as it drifted. Failing in this, he turned back, and raced at the top of his speed to the head of the pier, and swinging round to the left, rushed on to the sands and towards the water's edge, shouting for help as he did so. Some fishermen were attending to a boat that was drawn up on the beach a little way off. Mr. Jossellin waved wildly at them, shouted wildly to them. They looked up, saw a shouting, gesticulating figure rushing madly to the water's edge; thought, perhaps, that they beheld a lunatic-suicide, and started in pursuit. When they reached the spot where the waves were wetting the stones, they found Mr. Jossellin standing there, hatless and breathless, pointing desperately at an oarless boat that was drifting on the advancing tide. In a few hoarse words Mr. Jossellin conveyed to the amazed fishermen some idea of what he had seen, and urged some of them to run a boat out and secure the horrible derelict, while he implored another to run to the police-station and acquaint the authorities with his strange discovery. The men looked suspiciously at Mr. Jossellin at first, and conveyed to each other in their broad Sussex speech pretty plainly the unflattering assumptions that he was either crazy or drunk. But Mr. Jossellin continuing to urge them, and the boat drifting nearer, and making manifest to the keen eyes of the sea-folk that it did contain something, they consented to take some action. There was no need to put out a boat, however. The water was shallow at that part of the beach, the boat itself not many feet away. One of the men broke away from the group, and wading boldly into the water, caught hold of the boat, gave a shrill cry of horror and alarm, let go his hold, caught it again, and shouted for help. Immediately the others plunged in and caught the boat, to be startled in their turn; then, with pale, averted faces, they drew the boat through the water and dragged it upon the shore, out of the reach of the advancing tide.

It is astonishing how quickly a crowd collects. Five minutes before it had seemed to Mr. Jossellin that he was almost the only person awake and abroad in all Brighton. Now he seemed to be the centre upon which the whole humanity of the town was rapidly converging. From all parts of the beach, from all parts of the parade, people came hurrying, inspired by that curious magnetic impulse which causes man to congregate. The half dozen men on the beach, who originally had gathered about the boat, had swelled in a few seconds to a crowd that was every moment gathering. Those immediately about the boat stared and shuddered; those behind who could see nothing questioned and struggled to see, and got all manner of answers to their wild inquiries and struggled all the harder. A man in the inner ring suddenly sickened at the horrible sight to which he found himself in such close proximity and fainted dead off. This created a new diversion in the crowd. The efforts to disentangle the swooning man from the throng caused the crowd to sway and oscillate, and gave to the latest arrivals on the scene the impression that the whole affair was merely some small excitement about a man who had fainted.

In the meantime, Mr. Jossellin, almost at his wits' end, was endeavouring, with the aid of the fishermen, whom he had impressed with the gravity of the situation, to keep the crowd from disturbing the ghastly jetsam. His entreaties and a donation of half-a-crown had induced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the youngest of the men to rush off to the police-station with his card and an urgent entreaty for assistance. The lad, impelled more by a desire to return to the grim entertainment which the sea had provided, than with any eager desire to assist the commonplace course of justice, did make good speed, and in a few minutes, which seemed like hours, Mr. Jossellin had the indescribable relief of seeing the helmets of half a dozen of the police making their way with difficulty through the mob. With the arrival of the police matters took a more ordinary, orderly course. The police formed a ring around the boat, keeping the crowd somewhat off, listened to Mr. Jossellin's story, glanced at each other curiously, and sent back for more assistance. It was decided that the best thing that could be done for the moment was to leave both boat and body exactly where they were. The boat was well out of reach of the advancing tide. Half a dozen large sails were drawn over it, completely concealing it and its bloody freight. A kind of ring of ropes and spars was formed all round it; and half a dozen policemen, judiciously disposed, were able to keep the now enormous crowd from coming too close to this ring. The Brighton police are not many in number, but they are an exceedingly efficient body of men, immensely respected by the townspeople, and they were perfectly able to maintain order, even under the exciting conditions existing. It was decided that a medical examination had better be held *in situ;* then the body would have to be removed, and the inevitable coroner's inquest held. These arrangements being made, and pending their execution, Mr. Jossellin returned to his hotel.

The medical inquiry disclosed some strange facts. The body was soon recognized as that of a young Italian girl, remarkable for her beauty, who had for some time formed one of the peripatetic attractions of Brighton. She used to go about the beach singing and playing a little mandoline, and the charm of her face, the sweetness of her voice, and the picturesqueness of her attire, had made her very popular, and ensured her success. The body was quite cold when the medical man examined it; the girl had evidently been dead many hours. Death had come upon her in a very horrible form. The boat was soaking with blood; all the front of her dress and other garments were soaked and stiff with blood. When the clothes were removed it became evident that they had been put on again, and very clumsily and carelessly, after the crime had been committed. The crime itself was peculiarly ghastly. The girl's body was practically ripped up, and closer examination showed that the girl's heart had been removed and was missing. The operation had been performed with a degree of skill that showed that the murderer, if not a practised surgeon, was at least possessed of no little surgical knowledge and dexterity. Medical evidence decided that the deed had been done with more than one instrument, and had been done with deliberation, care, and leisure.

As the day went on, more evidence came in. It was found that the boat belonged to a boatman near Kemp Town, who had missed it that very morning. One of the oars was picked up later on on one part of the beach; the other turned up later at a place a mile farther down. All inquiry failed in the slightest degree to connect this boat-owner with the crime. All he knew was that in the morning his boat, which had been drawn up the previous night, was missing; that the oars had somehow been abstracted from the boathouse. He had complained of his loss the moment he had discovered it, and as soon as he heard of the crime he came at once to the police office and recognized his own property. It was evident that he knew nothing whatever about the matter. As regarded the the girl herself, there was little to find out. She was a young Italian girl—a Neapolitan, like most of her wandering kind. She had come to Brighton about a month before; she knew almost no English, and lived with an old man and woman, who claimed to be, and no doubt were, her uncle and aunt. She was perfectly well conducted; the evidence of the old couple, who were quite overwhelmed with grief and terror, of all the other members of the little Italian colony in Brighton, and of the neighbours and police proved so much. The affair seemed inexplicable. No suspicion attached to any of the other Italians in the town, every one of whom was perfectly able to establish an *alibi* for the whole of the period during which it was possible that the murder had been committed. The mystery which enveloped the whole affair grew deeper and deeper, began, indeed, to seem insoluble.

* * * * * *

Exhausted by the excitements and inquiries of the day, Mr. Jossellin felt the need of a period of repose and reflection. It was getting late, and growing dusk; he felt a certain yearning for solitude. Yet solitude was hard to find on that eventful day. The story of the murder had spread, and all Brighton was abroad, hovering around the scene of the discovery, buzzing about the police-station, investing the porticos of hotels. Dubiously Mr. Jossellin sought the smoking-room; joyfully he entered it, for, to his surprise, it proved to be unoccupied. Its usual occupants were, no doubt, on the front, exchanging notes and seeking news and clues.

"This is admirable," said Mr. Jossellin, as he went in and sat down. The smoking-room was enveloped in a gray obscurity; never a very bright room, it was now drowned in the gathering dusk, and the attendant, perhaps seduced from his duties by the contagious excitement out of doors, had not yet lit the gas. It was just the very place Mr. Jossellin needed, and he gave a sigh of relief as he settled down in a dark corner, lit a cigar, and allowed the tranquil gloom of the place to act as a sedative to his over-wrought nerves. The thickly-glazed window, which opened on a by-street, glimmered faintly in the twilight; on the shadowed air, Mr. Jossellin could scarcely see the grey-blue swirls of his cigar-smoke. He sat there and smoked and thought while the darkness deepened, and still his keen lawyer-like mind could find no theory to the mystery.

"But I will find it out," he said to himself aloud, "if it takes all my holiday."

And he brought his hand down with a sharp slap on his knee, in emphasis of his determination.

"Do you really think you will?"

The question came at him out of the surrounding blackness, loud, clear, almost menacing. Mr. Jossellin could not help starting, as he peered into the surrounding shadows and seemed to discern one shadow darker and more distinct than the rest. It is never very pleasant to believe oneself to be alone and find that one has company.

The voice spoke again.

"I beg your pardon if I startled you; but you spoke your thoughts aloud, and the thoughts interested me."

The voice was a peculiar voice. It was very soft, very sweet, very distinct, with a peculiar caressing quality in its tone. It was not, it seemed to Mr. Jossellin, an entirely English voice. It seemed to have the faintest sub-flavour of a foreign accent about it; yet an accent so slight that it might be unnoticeable to a less keen ear.

"I certainly thought I was alone," said Mr. Jossellin, "and I was indulging in the bad habit of talking to myself."

"You were thinking, of course," said the voice again, "of what all Brighton is now thinking of?"

"I was," said Mr. Jossellin.

"And you are resolved to solve the mystery?"

"I am."

"Indeed; how very interesting!" there was a faint flavour of irony in the tone of the voice now. "How, pray, if I may make so bold?"

"I don't know how yet," said Mr. Jossellin bluntly; "but I mean to do it somehow."

"Indeed!" the voice was, if the term may be employed, perfectly colourless again. "You will be rendering a public service; you will prove yourself a man of rare ability. Permit me. I see your cigar is nearly out. Let me tempt you with one of mine; I think you will find them remarkable. There are none like them in the world."

As the voice spoke, the darkest shadow stirred itself, and rose, looming large and tall in the enveloping mistiness. Mr. Jossellin was conscious that a cigar-case was placed immediately in contact with his hand.

Something boastful in the tone of the voice piqued Mr. Jossellin. Like most other smokers—that is to say, like most of the occupants of the globe—he fancied himself to be an excellent judge of a good cigar, and it was, therefore, with a certain sense of irritation that he allowed his fingers to extract a cigar and his voice to thank the unknown.

"Allow me," said the voice again, and somewhere about the shadow a dull point of light gleamed, and a peculiar odour tickled Mr. Jossellin's sense of smell. The match glowed without illuminating the unknown; who lit Mr. Jossellin's cigar, did the same office for himself, and blotted itself out again in the blackest shadow.

It certainly was a wonderful cigar; Mr. Jossellin had never smoked anything resembling it before. At first he did not think he liked it, and yet he found it practically impossible to throw it aside. Its flavour seemed to blend itself insidiously about his brain, lulling him to a delicious stage of langorous repose. Out of the darkness came the voice again.

"Have you any theory about the matter?"

"Not yet," said Mr. Jossellin, and his voice sounded dreamy and far away to himself as he spoke. "When I have marshalled all the facts I shall evolve a theory to fit them."

"I do not think you would easily find it out," the voice said. Mr. Jossellin felt annoyed, and tried to shift his attitude so as to more directly face his invisible companion. But somehow or other it seemed to him that any change of attitude was distasteful, and he remained as he was.

"Perhaps you think you could manage it," he retorted with certain defiance.

"I think I could." The voice was very clear and calm.

"Indeed! I should like to hear your theory," said Mr. Jossellin, with more of a sneering tone than was becoming; but the voice irritated him.

This time the voice only laughed—a low, quiet, intensely irritating laugh. Mr. Jossellin, nettled, put a question.

"Why was the murder committed in a boat?"

"Because," the voice answered, "that was one of the simplest means of isolating the act."

"I cannot quite see that," said Mr. Jossellin. "The murderer himself would have to get back."

"No," said the voice; "he might have no necessity for getting back to land. He might have a yacht, for instance, a steam yacht."

"Ah!" said Mr. Jossellin, excitedly, "he might steal a boat, entice his victim on board, row out to where his own yacht was waiting for him, attach his boat to a convenient rope, and then and there commit the crime."

Though Mr. Jossellin spoke, it seemed to him even that he was only, as it were, translating the thoughts of his companion.

"Yes," said the voice.

"But, then," Mr. Jossellin resumed, "I do not quite understand the motive of the deed. Why should the murderer cut out the girl's heart?"

"There are strange secrets in the East," said the voice. "The hearts of maidens when they have first throbbed with love are precious in their power of prolonging life."

"Then you think," said Mr. Jossellin, "that the poor girl was in love with her murderer, and that he killed her because she was in love with him in order to get her heart?"

"I am sure of it," said the voice.

"But such a man would not be a common murderer," said Mr. Jossellin; "he would be a devil."

"Life is precious," said the voice. "Let us not quarrel over terms. He who has lived for many centuries is not anxious to lose his heritage for so small a cost."

"But his companions," said Mr. Jossellin, "the men on the yacht? Even if they were his accomplices, he could not count upon their fidelity."

"Fidelity is still possible," said the voice, "in lands where slavery is not a lost art; and it does not take many to work a steam yacht."

"But the girl," urged Mr. Jossellin; "would she not cry out? Would she not struggle? She was young and strong."

"The West is proud of chloroform," said the voice; "but the East has stranger drugs than that. Suppose there were some essence so subtle that its slightest inhalation would procure absolute suspension of all the physical faculties, while leaving the consciousness unimpaired?"

"There is no such drug," said Mr. Jossellin.

"Indeed!"

Mr. Jossellin was conscious that the shadow had stirred again, and was standing by his side. The next second, a faint, odd perfume thrilled him. He tried to speak, and could not articulate. He tried to move, and found that he was as motionless as marble.

The voice spoke again.

"It would be very easy to kill you now; to cut your heart out of your living body, if your heart were of the faintest use to any one except yourself. You could not make one cry; you could not move one finger, though the point of the sacrificial knife were at this moment pressed into your worthless flesh."

In the agony of that moment, Mr. Jossellin understood something of the horrors of the mediæval hell. The shadow wavered, receded, vanished; all was darkness.

A sound of feet, a gleam of light, seemed to arouse Mr. Jossellin from his trance. The waiter had come in, and was lighting the gas. He looked at Mr. Jossellin curiously. Mr. Jossellin tried, and found, to his inexpressible relief, that he could speak, although his dry tongue almost refused its office, and seemed to rattle in a wooden way against his palate.

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"Where is the man who was here just now?" he gasped.

The waiter shook his head. "There was nobody here, sir, except yourself."

"I tell you there was," said Mr. Jossellin, angrily. "I talked with him for a long time."

"You've been asleep, sir, that's how it is," said the waiter. "You were fast asleep when I came into the room this minute."

Mr. Jossellin gasped. Could he have dreamed all that! He glanced at the floor. On one side of his chair lay the stump of his first cigar; on the other, a small pinch of yellowish ash, which, as he stooped down to examine it, floated impalpably before his breath into the air.

* * * * * *

A year later, Mr. Jossellin, then back in New York and comfortably settled down in Washington Square, read in his *New York Herald* an account of an extraordinary tragedy in France, at Trouville. A young girl had been found murdered on the beach. The body was cut open and the heart removed. A mere chance directed suspicion against a wealthy Indian prince, who had just returned from a cruise in the Mediterranean in his steam yacht. The prince was arrested; but he baffled curiosity by committing suicide in his imprisonment. It was the opinion of many eminent doctors that the prince was mad. It was said that he believed he had lived for centuries, and that he had studied deeply all the arts of prolonging life. One of the most curious features of the strange case was that all the men upon the prince's yacht were men of his own race, and that, on learning of the manner of their master's death, they all committed suicide as well.

Mark Twain and the Tooth-Powder.—Not long ago Mark Twain was travelling in the country, and stopped at a house presided over by an elderly woman. He was shown to a room somewhat bare of ornament and furniture, yet slept peacefully until morning. When morning came and he arose, he became mindful of the fact that, although he had provided himself with a tooth-brush, he had forgotten his tooth-powder. He consoled himself with the thought that there must be tooth-powder lying somewhere about. After a brief search he discovered something in a small box on the mantel which certainly resembled tooth-powder. At any rate, he used it vigorously on his teeth, and found it satisfactory. When he got downstairs he apologized to his hostess for using her tooth-powder. She appeared surprised. "What tooth-powder?" she inquired, blandly. "It was on the mantel," Mark replied. "On the mantel?" she repeated. "Yes, in a small box; it was excellent," he declared. "Good gracious!" she ejaculated, "that wasn't tooth-powder." "What was it?" asked Mark, now slightly alarmed. "Why, that was auntie," said she. It seems that "auntie" was cremated.

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THE TRICK OF THE LOCK.

By Austin Noel.

Mudford was by no means a lively place, either from the point of view of the man of culture or from that of the more commonplace individual. The former class was by no means well represented in the little town, and as old Mr. Lexicon, who had a reputation extending as far as London for being the best Greek scholar in the South of England, declared Mudford to be "a stagnating hole," it may be taken for granted that intellectually it was the reverse of distinguished. As for the commonplace folk, represented by Mr. Robert Potter, the fast young farmer, his opinion of Mudford (expressed over his cups to the barmaid at the "Berrington Arms") was summed up in the declaration that "he should die if he didn't run up to town for a little flutter now and again." Mr. Potter's "flutters" must have been of a very exhausting nature, seeing that they necessitated, as a rule, a week's rest in bed on his return to Mudford. Simple-minded folk also concluded that the "flutters" were not unconnected with pugilism and the prize-ring, seeing that on more than one occasion Mr. Potter returned to his native town with a damaged optic, which took weeks to repair.

Taking it all in all, then, it is undeniable that they were "a slow lot" at Mudford, as Mr. Potter, in the exercise of his expressive vocabulary would have put it; yet there were counterbalancing advantages. For instance, the neighbourhood was pretty, and the people unconventional and hospitably inclined. They had their share of the little dissipations and gaieties of the world also. There were tennis parties in summer, and "small and earlies" in winter, and "junketings," as the Mudford folks termed them, at harvest-home and Christmas-tide. The elderly ladies indulged largely in those solemn functions known as high teas, whereat the High Church tendencies of Mr. Smallwood, the last-appointed curate, or the enormities of the maid-servants' red ribbons and other furbelows were fully discussed.

But that which chiefly distinguished Mudford in the eyes of its own inhabitants was the munificence of a former resident and landowner, one Vincent, who had mortified a very considerable sum of money for the foundation of the Almshouses, or Retreat for Decayed Mudfordians. This benefaction was spoken of far and wide by the Mudford folks as if it were the most distinguished bequest of the century, and they were as proud of these almshouses as a Londoner might be of St. Paul's or the Houses of Parliament.

To the almshouses came those ancient and decayed specimens of the Mudford race who had done none too well in the world, and who at the close of life's day were more than glad to find a cosy nook wherein to end their lives. Mudford came to look to the almshouses as affording excellent opportunities for the construction of local biography. There was Sam Perraton, for instance, who had made a fortune in Australia, spent it in London, and came to Mudford to exist on the fortune of another—namely, that of the founder of the almshouses himself. Who, asked Mudford, would have ever heard anything about Sam Perraton had not "Vincent's," as local folks sometimes named the almshouses, been open to receive him? Then there was Charles Ridley, who had married a rich widow, and who (so it was said), having once upon a time chastised one of his stepsons rather severely, found himself cut off with a shilling by the will of his irate spouse. "Vincent's" received Mr. Ridley and gave him a cosy corner, where

Mr. Sam Perraton and himself could chew the cud of reflection to their hearts' content, and fight their battles over again day by day.

Admission to "Vincent's" was a matter of some difficulty. If you desired to become an inmate, and to obtain board, lodging, and the sum of half-a-crown per week for pocket-money (which Mr. Perraton declared was a disgracefully small sum), with doles at Christmas and Easter, you had first of all to prove your birth as a Mudfordian; secondly, to show that you were really, in a worldly sense, a decayed person; thirdly, that you were over the age of fifty, and unable to work for yourself; and either a bachelor, spinster, widower, or widow, without obvious personal means of support; while, lastly, you must show that you were a person of,—well, fair reputation, and not likely to brawl or otherwise disturb the peace of the community. There were powers of expulsion vested in the Guardians of "Vincent's," who comprised the Rector, the Dean of the neighbouring Cathedral, a couple of local lawyers, three independent gentlemen of the district, and a secretary. The last was a paid official, Zechariah Garlick by name. Mr. Perraton, owing to sundry disputes with the secretary over outings at unseasonable hours, was wont to declare of that official that "his name and his natur' was amazin' suitable," which was Mr. Perraton's nearest approach to a sarcastic joke.

"Vincent's" folks were allowed a very fair margin of liberty. When old Jinkins, who had been a grocer given to chronic bankruptcy, declared that nine o'clock p.m., the hour fixed for retiring at "Vincent's," was "two hours too early, by gosh!" he expressed the collective feelings of Mr. Perraton and other malcontents, and gained for himself the reputation of being "a gay old thing," who had seen many nights blossom into their next days before he went to bed, in his bygone days when in the grocery line. They were a set of chronic grumblers, however, at "Vincent's," where the domestic arrangements were, indeed, highly commendable, from the public point of view. There was to be no drunkenness, on pain of dismissal; no late attendance at the Parish Church on Sundays and holy days, and no lights after nine p.m., at which time it was regarded as suitable that persons in their second childhood should be in bed. Then there were weekly visitations by a sub-committee, and "a nice snifflin' about and hee-hawin' they made of it," Mr. Perraton declared. "What with pokin' their noses into his room, and that there Garlick makin' remarks about his readin' the *Police Court Chronicle* (embellished each week with faithful representations of at least three ghastly murders), it was enough to make a feller sick!" But the weekly inspection was needed, and the visits of the charitable ladies of Mudford, who, along with a paid nurse, Mrs. Ray, attended to the sick, and smoothed the way of the decayed out of the world, all tended to constitute "Vincent's" as nearly a model charity as human care could make it.

All the cooking was done on the premises by Dennis Power and his wife, who lived at the lodge. There was, as we have said, a female side to "Vincent's," wherein decayed old women were harboured and sheltered, and the "ladies' side" was duly separated from that of Mr. Perraton and his neighbours; although all the grounds and gardens were common to the sexes, and formed a kind of meeting place, where such polite manners and greetings as had not been forgotten by "Vincent's" inmates were duly exchanged.

Such was the state of matters at "Vincent's" when a vacancy in that establishment on the male side occurred. Alexander Grubb, aged eighty years, having had left him a legacy of five hundred pounds, by the unexpected death of a distant relative, gave up his room at "Vincent's," and set up as a gentleman at large in Mudford. History relates that Mr. Grubb, who might have lived for another eighty years to all appearances, and attained to a Methuselah-like antiquity, had he remained at "Vincent's," took to frequenting the "Berrington Arms," and to cultivating a taste for consuming brandy-and-water at frequent intervals by day and by night also. There was a funeral at Mudford in about six months after Mr. Grubb's retirement from the almshouses, and as that gentleman had contrived to spend about three hundred pounds of his legacy, there was wailing in the dwelling of the next heir, who proved to be a railway-porter at Cable Junction, blessed with a family of thirteen.

In Grubb's place there was elected a personage rejoicing in the name of Richard Selby, who, as time passed, came to be known to his familiars and equals as "Dicky." Selby hailed from Mudford, but had spent the best part of his existence in London, as a locksmith, in the employment of Messrs. Holdfast & Bolter, whose safes and locks are, of course, of world-wide fame.

Dicky was a kind of "mechanical person," in more ways than one, but his reputation as a clever locksmith was undoubted, and had been fairly earned. His money had been spent chiefly in the public-house, and when Dicky came to Mudford he was a veritable pauper, glad to receive the shelter of "Vincent's," and to enjoy what he regarded as his rights as a Mudfordian born and bred. Relations he had none, save a brother and a widowed half-sister, a Mrs. Grayson, much younger than himself, who had married respectably, and had but one child, a daughter, Melody. Her husband had been a locksmith likewise, and, along with Dicky and his brother Charles, had worked in Holdfast & Bolter's factory. Of Charles Selby, the brother, nothing had been heard for some two or three years prior to Dicky's arrival at "Vincent's;" hence Mrs. Grayson, and Melody, her daughter, were the only relatives Dicky apparently possessed. Melody, it may be added, was an accomplished, well-educated girl, who had qualified herself for the duties of a governess, and was in every way a credit to her parent.

At the time of which I write, Dicky had been duly settled in his retreat. He had failed to become a popular member of the community. He was inclined to moroseness, and was apt to resent the conviviality of Mr. Perraton and Mr. Ridley. He declared that he was "tired of hearin' of Perraton's going-on with a lot of fools as big as himself;" and he expressed to Mr. Ridley the wish that he would soon follow the late Mrs. Ridley to that place where "talking, and magging, and jawing was unknown." Thus abashed, these worthies seldom troubled Dicky Selby with their company.

But Dicky could be convivial enough when he had opportunity and cash. He was wont to break rules, and to sneak along to the "Berrington Arms" after dark, when occasion offered; and report had it that he returned, on the quiet, but very much the worse for his potations.

When old Dr. King came to attend Dicky, who was suffering from a cold, that astute worthy was not behindhand in suggesting to the Doctor a line of treatment of a remarkably simple and agreeable kind.

"They tells me, doctor," said Dicky, "that when a man's got a cold on his chest, there ain't anythink equal to rum-and-milk in the morning, and the same thing drunk hot at bed-time, for clearin' the tubes and stoppin' the cough.

"Maybe, Dicky," said the doctor; "but we won't try

such a desperate remedy yet awhile," and so Dicky had to be content with his gruel and his cough-mixture. The former he designated "hog's-wash," and the latter "fit to make a pig white in the face," from which declaration it may be surmised Dicky was by no means an agreeable or grateful personage.

One day, late in the year, when "Vincent's" was beginning to bethink itself about Christmas decorations, Dr. King was summoned to the almshouses to see Dicky Selby, who was reported to have been taken seriously ill. There was no doubt Dicky was in a bad way. His old enemy, the bronchitis, had come upon him once again, after an unwise exposure in the garden, where Dicky had done a little digging, and he was certainly "in for it again," as he graphically put it to the doctor.

By-and-bye Mrs. Grayson and her daughter Melody were summoned from London by Dr. King's orders. Dicky had taken a bad turn, and his relatives were summoned in case of the worst coming to pass.

"Dicky seems to have something on his mind," said Dr. King to Mrs. Grayson. "He's perpetually muttering to himself and calling out about justice and revenge, and I can't make it out at all."

So Mrs. Grayson, a pale, gentle-mannered woman, was told to watch him closely, and to assist the nurse Ray in her ministrations.

Dr. King at this time had an assistant, one Dr. Herbert Eden. When Melody Grayson, accompanied by her mother, came to Mudford, and took up her abode in a little cottage, whose owner, Widow Carter, had two rooms to let, Dr. Eden found in Melody an old friend. She had been governess in the family of one of Dr. Eden's college friends, and on his visits to this family Eden had contrived to fall in love with Melody, and had likewise managed to imbue that young lady with no unfavourable impressions regarding himself. It was an understood thing between Dr. Eden and Melody that when he could find a practice for himself, they were to unite their fortunes in that estate which means partnership for life. Indeed, Herbert Eden was a lucky fellow. Melody was a girl such as you might not at first notice intently, but whose sweet face would light up on better acquaintance with a fairness and beauty that bespoke the cultivated woman.

Clad in her neat grey dress, Melody sees Herbert Eden walking towards the cottage on the way to "Vincent's." Her uncle Dicky had been rather a trial to her mother and herself. But, as things were, possibly Dicky had done the best for himself in securing his election as an annuitant, and he was in the way of obtaining at least a comfortable end to his days, such as his previous habits could hardly have been expected to bring.

"What's this I hear about uncle, Herbert?" inquired Melody, as Eden approached her.

"Oh! it's nothing, I believe," said the doctor. "Dr. King thinks your uncle has something on his mind, my sweetheart, and that he's worrying over it, and delaying his recovery. However, I am going to see how he is, and I'll let you know as I come back."

A few exchanges of loving words, and Eden hurried off on his round of duties. At "Vincent's" he found Dicky Selby restless and feverish. The patient was perpetually muttering and grumbling.

"Am I going to be snuffed out this turn, doctor?" inquired Dicky.

"Not if you will be patient and don't excite yourself," replied Eden. "What's all this you're worrying about?" he added. "If you won't keep quiet you can't get well, you know."

"Ah! doctor," replied Dicky, "what's in the brain won't square with what's in the lungs. I ain't much of a philosopher, I'm afeared; only there's something I'd like done.—Now I wonder if I could trust him," said Dicky, as if communing with himself. "No, no!" he said, "it ain't to be done"—and then relapsed into a dogged silence.

Mrs. Grayson remarked to Dr. Eden that his constant worry over the mysterious something was wearing Dicky out; and the doctor agreed with her.

"I'll give him a draught to-night which will make him sleep," said Eden in an undertone to Mrs. Grayson, as he left the room.

As he walked past Widow Carter's, he hailed Melody again, and told her that her uncle was much about the same. Melody promised to relieve her mother's watch in the afternoon, and Eden went off on his rounds for the day.

When night came, Dr. Eden was as good as his word. With Dr. King's concurrence, Dicky Selby swallowed, unknown to himself, a sleeping-draught of more than usual strength. Then Mrs. Grayson stayed on with Melody and Dr. Eden to note the effect of the draught, and to wait the arrival of Nurse Ray for her usual night-watch.

It often happens, however, that when a patient is desired to go to sleep, he illustrates "the law of contrairies," and refuses to obey the mandate of medicine. A double dose of sleeping-mixture, too, will often excite rather than soothe the patient.

Dicky Selby dozed off after he swallowed his potion, and appeared in a fair way of enjoying a good rest for the night. But in a short time he started up in bed and began a series of very extraordinary acts, such as impressed very forcibly the minds of Mrs. Grayson, Melody, and the doctor.

"Listen to him," said Dr. Eden, "it's just possible we may get a clue to what his mind has been running on these few days past. It's the effect of the big opiate he has had."

Dicky rose up in bed and gesticulated at an imaginary opponent.

"Look here, Charley," he said, "don't you drive me to extremities.... I ain't done nothing you've got to do with.... Let me alone, I say, or it'll be the worse for you.... Brother be hanged! You've no call to lecture me. Can't I make locks and keys for anybody I like?...." Then Dicky fell back on his pillow, and the watchers waited and watched.

"Charley!" said Mrs. Grayson in a whisper to Melody, "why that must be your uncle Charley, of course. Now I wonder whatever Dicky has done to him that's exciting his mind now?"

Then Dicky began his ramblings again.

"I say, Charley, don't you force me to strike you.... It's a fair and square job I've been doing, and you think I've been up to selling our trade-secrets, do you?.... Dicky Selby hasn't any need to do that.... Look at that big safe behind you, man:.... That's our 'Premier.' .... Who made it all? Why, *me*, you blockhead;.... and who knows all the ways of the thing?.... Why, Dicky, of course.... Bah! you couldn't open it if you tried, and no more could any other body.... The governors want a nice price for that safe,....but they won't sell it without giving me my bonus for the lock.... What! you scoundrel, you're no brother to me."—Then Dicky became at this stage greatly excited.—"You've been at the 'Premier,' have you, you sneaking hound? and you know the secret of the door—you cur? .... Damn you! I'll be even with you yet....you're

the only man who knows the trick of the lock, and by heavens! you'll remain the only man that knows it.... So you can open my safe, can you?.... All right, do it.... He's opened it!.... Look at it well, you sneak.... Softly—he's just right....one blow, and it's all over.... Take that, you sneaking scoundrel!.... The door slams!.... There's a lock for you, my boy! You're safe in there till....my God!—Charley!.... What have I done?.... The safe.... Oh! forgive—forgive—I didn't mean it!....forgive—pardon...."

Then a small parcel which Dicky had taken from beneath his pillow, was thrown into the air, the patient exclaiming:—

"Into the sea with it....bury it in the deep for ever!...."

Here Dicky fell exhausted on his pillow, and the three watchers regarded each other with horrified eyes. Dr. Eden picked up the parcel and opened it. It contained three keys of curious shape. There was no doubt Dicky had enacted before them, under the influence of his sleeping draught, a crime in which his brother Charley and himself had been the chief actors.

What was that crime? Let them think it out. Nurse Ray came in at this stage, and was duly instructed by Dr. Eden in her duties for the night. There was need for deliberation, and at Widow Carter's, Mrs. Grayson, Melody, and Dr. Eden held deep council.

"I've often heard your uncle speak of that 'Premier' safe," said Mrs. Grayson to Melody; "it's one he designed and made, and I fancy he quarrelled with Holdfast & Bolter over his royalty for the locks which he invented."

"Was the safe sold?" inquired Eden.

"I fancy not," said Mrs. Grayson, "for Melody's father used to say it had too many secrets about it to be a handy safe at all."

"Then it will be at Holdfast's still," argued Eden.

"I should say so," said Mrs. Grayson; "but, oh! Dr. Eden, what if Dick's ravings should be true?"

"Mother, dear!" said Melody, "don't excite your dear old self. It's probably nothing, after all—only ravings."

"Let me see," said Mrs. Grayson, "my brother, Charles, left his work suddenly, and didn't come near us to bid us good-bye. It was your uncle Dick, I can remember, who told us Charley had got a job somewhere on the Continent, and that he had left Holdfast's in a hurry. After that, there never came a scrap or a line from Charley to tell us whether he was alive or dead. Can it be," she again asked, "that Dick ——? But, no; I won't believe it," she said, as the tears rose to her eyes.

"Don't you think I might go to London and make inquiries in a quiet way at Holdfast's?" said Eden; "there must surely be some clue or other which will settle the matter, or lead us towards the truth."

"Do so, Herbert," said Melody, "and mother and I will be patient and wait here in hope, and trust that all will be well."

And so the matter was concluded. Dicky was left to Dr. King's sole care, and grew no worse; and Herbert Eden, on some pretext or other, took a journey to London, and visited Messrs. Holdfast & Bolton's famous safe works at Bow.

Mr. Holdfast received Eden courteously enough. Yes, he knew Charley Selby and Dicky Selby also, and he also had in his employ, once upon a time, James Grayson. Dick Selby had been a good workman and an ingenious man, but was very erratic. They had parted with him because of his drinking habits, and because they had disputed his claim for royalties on a patent arrangement regarding safe-locks and detectors. He was glad to hear Dicky Selby was alive. Of Charles, nothing had been heard for two or three years. He had left their employ suddenly. His brother Dicky had arranged for the arrears of pay owing him to be sent on to him. They had made no inquiries about Charles. Their skilled workmen were often erratic in their ways of going and coming, and Charles, at the time, was on piece-work, and not regularly employed by them. He would give the names of the other London and Birmingham safe-makers with pleasure. The safe invented by Mr. Dicky Selby was still in their premises. If the gentleman would step this way, he could see it. What was its value? Well, Mr. Holdfast could hardly say, but would inquire. He supposed Mr. Dicky Selby could claim a royalty on it even now, if it were sold. Mr. Holdfast despaired of selling it at all. They didn't understand that "Premier" safe. Only Dicky himself knew all the tricks of the locks. Mr. Holdfast had seen it opened—but not since Dicky Selby had left. It was a piece of folly, that safe; and Mr. Holdfast would be glad to get rid of it at a very low price indeed.

This was all that Herbert Eden could ferret out about Dicky Selby's safe, and about his brother's disappearance. Hurriedly taking counsel with himself, he resolved to offer for the safe. Mr. Holdfast would let him have it cheap. If Dicky's ravings were true, and the body of Charles Selby lay inside the safe, Eden argued that it were better that at least the secret should be in his power, and at his disposal. For Melody's sake he resolved even to compound a felony, if need be; and if Dicky lived, he must reveal the secret of the safe, and then go away to the uttermost end of the earth.

If Dr. Eden wanted a safe, and Dicky Selby could describe its construction, and give up the keys which Mr. Holdfast believed he had, it would serve as a secure repository. So the bargain was concluded; and in a few days there was delivered at Dr. Eden's lodgings a safe which excited the curiosity of Mudford because of its size, and because of the speculation which was rife regarding the need Dr. Eden had for such an article of furniture.

* * * * * *

Dicky Selby recovered from his bronchitis, and was able once more to sit out in the sun for a few minutes each day, enjoying the clear, dry air of a mild December. Mr. Perraton, in one of his peregrinations, had heard of the arrival of a big safe at Dr. Eden's.

"That's something in your line, ain't it?" said he to Dicky, over the low hedge which separated his domain from that of Selby.

"What's that?" said Dicky.

"It's a big safe Dr. Eden got home t'other day," said Perraton. "My gosh!" added Mr. Perraton, "what's up? Hey, hulloo!" cried he to Nurse Ray, as he saw Dicky turn ghastly white, and fall over in his chair.

"Blowed if he hain't fainted clean off!" said Perraton, as he assisted Nurse Ray to carry Dicky indoors, and to restore him to consciousness.

"'Twarn't my fault," said Perraton, in reply to Nurse Ray. "I was only a-tellin' him about Dr. Eden's big safe. There ain't nothin' in that to set him off. Warn't he in the safe line?" Whereupon Mr Perraton, mumbling something about the irrationality of women, took his departure, leaving Dicky alone with Nurse Ray.

Later on in the week—it was within two days of Christmas—Dicky's restlessness at last culminated in the

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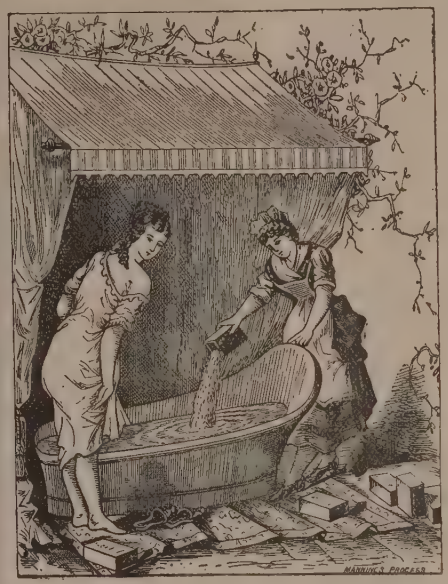

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resolution to see the safe. He had brooded over things until he was well-nigh in a fever again.

He made his way to Widow Carter's and saw Mrs. Grayson and Melody.

With an attempt at a smile, Dicky said that he thought of asking Dr. Eden to show him his safe.

"It's all in my line," said Dicky, his lips twitching with suppressed excitement, "and I'd like to see it. Mebbe I know the make well."

It chanced that Dr. Eden was at home, and was expecting the trio, for Melody had meanwhile despatched a note of warning to her lover, acquainting him with Dicky's intention.

It was a trying time for all concerned. Dicky, of course, was haunted by his own conscience, and by his knowledge of the horrible secret a safe, *his* safe, contained. The others were equally horrified at the prospect of the probable discovery of a foul crime.

Presently they reach Eden's lodgings. He receives them not without emotion. "Come to see my safe," he says, gaily enough, to Dicky.

"Yes—yes—that is, I thought I'd like to see the old make once more."

"Well, it's in the store-room at the back," said Eden, "come through this way;" and he allowed the party to pass before him, while he locked the door behind him, to ensure privacy during the dreadful test about to be made of the man's guilt or innocence.

"Here you are," said Eden, throwing open the store-room door.

"Oh, Lord!" ejaculated Dicky, "it's my 'Premier!' and then he grovelled on his hands and knees, and cried out "For God's sake, doctor, don't open it—don't open it!"

"My dear Mr. Selby, I can't open it, and I want you to open it for me," said Eden.

"I can't," gasped Dicky, "I—I've lost the keys. . . . I never had any."

"Come, now," said Eden, sternly, "don't you talk nonsense. Here are the keys you had below your pillow, and you shall open that safe before us now."

"Oh, spare me, doctor! Melody"—turning to his niece—"for heaven's sake, plead for me! There's a terrible secret connected with that safe—I can't open it." And then the miserable man grovelled on the ground and wept bitterly. Mrs. Grayson cried also.

"Here are the keys," said Eden, sternly, "if you won't open the safe I will."

"No, don't!" said Dicky, "I'll do it then. God forgive me, a miserable sinner!"

Then he approached the safe. First he inserted one key in one notch, and another key in another aperture, and then a third key was placed in a third and concealed opening. Then there was heard a whirring, as of wheels rapidly revolving, then a pause, and finally the great door swung back on its hinges as easily and lightly as the door of a doll's house.

Dicky Selby, on his knees, grovelled before his open safe.

"Look, man! look!" said Dr. Eden. "Be a man, and face your crime!" said he.

At last Dicky looked up, his face in his hands, and slowly unclosing his hands, gazed on the safe's interior.

"Empty! by God!" he ejaculated; and then Dicky Selby, freed from the spectre of an avenging Nemesis, actually danced a few steps of a hornpipe, caught his niece round the waist and hugged her, kissed Mrs. Grayson (for the first time for years), and would have performed a similar operation on Dr. Eden but for that gentleman's agility in escaping Dicky's attentions.

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Dicky, "here's a nice go. For these three years I've been haunted by a curse. I thought I had knocked Charley into the safe and locked him in to die," said Dicky, "and its been all a mistake——"

"Yes, and no thanks to you, Dicky," said a voice at his back.

"Charley, by Jingo!" cried Dicky, as he turned to clasp the hand of his missing brother.

"Yes, it's Charley, old chap," said that individual; "and you may thank Dr. Eden here for his trouble in getting you out of a nice mess. You knocked me into the safe in one of your drunken fits, Dicky; and you slammed the door, didn't you, old chap? Ah! but you forgot part of your patent was that nice little arrangement by which you could open your safe from the inside. You said you didn't want any poor chap to get suffocated even by chance in your safe, and you didn't remember I knew the trick of the lock. So I thought I'd give you a fright, Dicky, for I was real wild at you; and if it's cured you of your drunken fits, why so much the better. Dr. Eden found me out working in the North, where I've a share in a nice little business, and where we're making safes on your pattern, Dicky, every day. You see, your patent's out, but I've improved it, and I'll give you a share of my profits, which are big enough to take you out of "Vincent's," and to give Melody here a marriage-portion whenever she and the Doctor like to run in double harness. So shake hands, Dicky; it's Christmas time, and there's to be no clouds at this happy season."

Dicky Selby was weeping copiously.

"Don't cry, old man!" said Charley. "It's all come right. There's plenty of fun yet in store for you and me, and there's happiness for all of us nigh at hand."

"Forgive me, Charley, and all of you," was all Dicky could say—and they did.

* * * * * *

Mr. Perraton, still resident at "Vincent's," speaks of Dicky Selby's farewell supper as an event worth chronicling. Mr. Ridley and himself were indisposed for days thereafter, which, I take it, testified to the liberality of the scale on which the "refreshment department" was arranged. Melody has been Mrs. Eden for some years, and Mrs. Grayson acts as nurse-in-chief to two chubby bairns, one of whom is her mother in miniature. Charles Selby prospers in the safe line in the North, and Dicky stays with him, intent on yet further improving the "Premier" make and the Trick of the Lock.

It was their first night on board the steamer. "At last," he said tenderly, "we are all alone, out upon the waters of the dark blue sea; and your heart will always beat for me as it has in the past?" "My heart is all right," she answered languidly; "but my stomach feels awful."

A Poser.—"Yes," said old Mr. Jones, "the doctors are getting mighty smart now-a-days; why, they've got instruments and things made so that they can see clean through you." "Humph!" replied old Mrs. Jones, "I don't see anything particularly smart in that. I've been married to you for thirty years, but I saw through you in two weeks after the bridal." Mr. Jones rubbed his bald head for a moment, and thoughtfully resumed his reading.

A PRACTICAL CONFESSION.

A DETECTIVE STORY.

By W. H. Stacpoole.

Miss Priscilla Simpkins was an elderly maiden lady who lived with her niece, Miss Edith Leyton, at Merton Lodge, a large semi-detached house in the Camden-road. Besides the house and furniture, she owned some £70,000, 3 per cent. Consols, and a very fat and lazy pug dog named Algernon Tarleton. Algernon Tarleton derived his surname from a celebrated family of pugs to which he belonged, while his Christian name had been given him (in preference to Towzer, his former rather vulgar praenomen) by Miss Simpkins, who, when speaking to strangers or servants, always referred to him as Tarleton—or *Mister* Tarleton if she thought he had not been treated with due respect.

Edith Leyton was a very pretty girl of about twenty-three. She had two suitors—a doctor and a clergyman; but these, with sundry articles of clothing and jewellery, her pretty face, and a magnificent head of golden hair, constituted about the only worldly property of which she was possessed.

From the above inventory the reader will see at once the relative position in which the two ladies stood to one another, and the power the aunt possessed of vetoing any independent action on the part of her niece, especially in love matters.

Now, barring the one everlasting subject of Algernon, Algie, Tarleton, or Mr. Tarleton—as she variously addressed the animal, according to mood or circumstances—there were three considerations which had pretty well engrossed Miss Simpkins's mind for some weeks before the date of my story. They were, first, the merits of the Rev. Adolphus Sleekly; secondly, the demerits of Dr. Edward Graham; and, thirdly, resulting from these two factors, the question how she would dispose of the £70,000 in her will. With respect to a small portion of this large sum, I ought to mention that an elaborate "Case for Opinion," backed by a substantial fee, had been laid before an eminent counsel in Lincoln's Inn, the question propounded in which was whether a bequest of a sum of money to be invested on trust to apply the interest to the maintenance of Algernon Tarleton, a dog, during his life, with reversion to human beings after his death, would be held good in law and equity. I need not trouble the reader, however, with the grave and learned reply, because shortly after delivering the "Case for Opinion" (for drawing up and attending to deliver which he duly charged, of course), Mr. Slosure, the solicitor, bethought himself that such a bequest would place the life of Algernon Tarleton in deadly peril, it being to the interest of the reversioner to destroy the said Algernon Tarleton, which, in the present state of the law, could be done with impunity, as no indictment for murder would lie. All of which having been duly submitted to Miss Simpkins in a fresh six-and-eightpenny consultation, the reply of counsel was anticipated by Mr. Slosure being instructed to prepare a fresh will in which any legal difficulties were got over by Tarleton being left to an old lady of her acquaintance together with the interest on £2,000 to be paid during his life, and in which the danger accruing from a hostile reversioner was evaded by the principal sum being left to a charity on the death of Tarleton. The will also contained divers provisions in the event of this lady predeceasing Tarleton, and was altogether a very elaborate and costly affair when it was finally approved of by counsel.

Dr. Graham was a young man of about twenty-six years of age, who had been practising in Kentish Town for about five years, ever since he was qualified in fact. His practice was a very large one, and gave him plenty of experience, besides which he was idolized by his innumerable patients. This, however, was about all the advantage he gained from it, for his patients were as poor as they were numerous, and, as he was a very kind-hearted man, most of them had contracted a habit of paying him with gratitude instead of cash. The consequence was that though he increased his knowledge immensely from year to year, did a great deal of good, and was universally esteemed, still his professional earnings did not keep pace with his labours. Small wonder then if the poor hard-worked doctor contrasted disadvantageously, in the eyes of Miss Simpkins, with the ethereal Sleekly, whose only occupation was to lisp a sermon, or "intone" the Church Service, which he did in a manner and accent that forbade the idea of his being able to do anything so vulgar as to speak out in the voice of an ordinary man. The events I am about to narrate took place a few days before Christmas. Dr. Graham had been called in to attend Miss Simpkins when Dr. Hamilton, a medical counterpart of Sleekly, and Miss Simpkins's regular adviser, was away for his holidays, during the previous autumn. In this way he became acquainted with Miss Leyton. The acquaintance ripened into love, but Miss Simpkins showed such hostility to the suit of Dr. Graham that it seemed very much as if Edith would have either to abandon her lover or elope with him. Not to trouble my readers with the bickering and wrangling that had been going on between the two ladies for some considerable time, I shall come at once to the afternoon when matters were brought to a crisis, which resulted in a very curious and unexpected *dénouement*.

On the afternoon in question, then, Miss Simpkins, who had just returned from a stroll she had been taking with Tarleton, came unexpectedly into the drawing-room, and found, to her utter horror and dismay, Dr. Graham and Miss Leyton sitting side by side on a sofa.

"Well, I declare—the audacity!" was all the old lady could say as she sank into a chair, breathless and astounded, while Tarleton got near to his mistress and gave three short, sharp barks, as if he also disapproved of such conduct.

"Aunt, dear——" said Edith, as she rose blushing from her seat.

"Don't 'dear' me!" interrupted Miss Simpkins. "I see from your faces—both of you—that you—that you have set me at defiance."

"I should be very sorry indeed to set you at defiance," said Dr. Graham, "but I have asked Miss Leyton to be my wife, and I am happy to say she has consented."

"You have actually dared to propose to Edith!" exclaimed Miss Simpkins, as she gazed at him in blank astonishment.

"Yes, madam," replied Dr. Graham, who had taken his seat on a chair not far from where she was sitting, and held his hat and stick in his hand preparatory to his departure. "I feel very much honoured indeed, but I don't think it ought to surprise you that I should——"

"Oh, no," Miss Simpkins interposed, snapping the words out of his mouth, "it does not surprise me in the least that you should have the audacity to propose to a girl who, as you think, will be worth £70,000 when I die."

"Oh, Aunt! how can you be so cruel?" cried Edith, bursting into tears.

"Stop whimpering, you booby," said Miss Simpkins savagely to her niece, "I'm getting old now, you wont have long to wait for my death; but what you'll get by waiting is another matter."

"Miss Simpkins, I am very sorry that you should allow yourself to speak in this way. You cannot mean what you say. But I think we had better discontinue the conversation for the present," said Dr. Graham as he rose from his seat.

"Do please sit down for a moment," replied Miss Simpkins, with mock politeness, and speaking in a voice that trembled with suppressed wrath. "We had better understand each other before we part."

"I am not aware," said Dr. Graham, as he resumed his seat, "that there is anything that requires to be explained. I am sorry, and I am sure you will be sorry also, when you reflect on the matter, that you should have attributed such base motives to me, but it matters little to me what any one may think, or say, so long as I have the love and confidence of Edith."

"Oh, bother love and confidence!" cried Miss Simpkins, who had taken out her purse, and was fumbling in it with fingers that shook with passion. "Here is what the confidence, and the love, and all the other tricks are about," she exclaimed at last, as she took out a one hundred pound Bank of England note, which she held before him. "This is what you are marrying her for, and this is all that either of you shall get from me." Saying which she crushed the note up into a pellet and threw it on the floor near his feet.

I do not know whether Dr. Graham thought she was going to strike him, but he was so startled that he dropped his hat and stick. However, he picked them up at once and rose from his seat, saying: "Good evening, Miss Simpkins; I am sure you will regret this when you are calmer."

"Never let me see you here again," was the rejoinder, and Miss Simpkins flounced out of the room.

"I must go, dear," he said to Edith. "You know I ought to have been back before now. Don't mind what your Aunt has said. Neither of us ever thought of her money, did we dear?"

"Of course not," replied Edith, as she kissed him before he opened the hall door

"I shall write to you to-night, love, and now, good-bye again. I am very late."

He ran down the steps, while she closed the hall door and returned to the drawing-room, the door of which was on the same landing and not four yards from the hall door."

Having watched him from the window as long as he was in sight, she sat down, apparently to meditate. When people are engaged in meditating, their eyes generally look downwards. Edith sat for a few minutes with her eyes bent on the carpet, until her gaze began at last to wander as if she was looking for something. Then she got up, and went over to where Dr. Graham had been sitting. She examined the carpet and the chairs minutely. She went on her knees and searched under his chair, under the chair where Miss Simpkins sat, under the table, groped about the room, searched, and searched, until she had inspected every square inch of the carpet, but without finding that of which she was in quest. Finally, she got up, with a flushed face, saying:—

"Good heavens! Where on earth *can* it be? I saw it fall near his feet. Aunt didn't take it—I didn't take it. Nobody could possibly have come into the room whilst we were at the hall-door. No, that is very certain. I was not out of the room for half a minute, and I did not turn my back to the door for a second. It is perfectly certain that Aunt and Edward and I are the only three people who have been in the room for the last hour or so. What can it mean? Could Edward have taken it for a joke when he bent down to pick up his hat and stick? His hands were near it. Oh, nonsense! he would have told me. Yet, where can it be? There was nobody but the three of us in the room. Oh, Edward, what a stupid, stupid joke if you have taken it!"

The one hundred pound note was gone!

As all the windows in the room were shut, and as only three people had been in the room since it fell upon the floor, it seemed to follow, of necessity, that one of these three people must have taken it; and, further, since that person was not either Edith or her aunt, the inevitable conclusion, by a process of induction which is known to logicians as the Method of Exhaustion, was that the person who took the bank-note was Dr. Graham. Even poor Edith was compelled to admit this, though, lover-like, she sought to explain the act as a joke.

Having again searched the room carefully, she went upstairs and tapped at the door of her Aunt's bedroom.

"It is a very curious thing about that note, Aunt," she said as she came into the room.

"The note? Goodness bless me, I forgot about it! It's all I'll give you—but where is it?" exclaimed her aunt.

"That's just what I don't know," said Miss Leyton nervously. "We left the room just after you did; we were only a few seconds at the door, and when I came back into the room I could not find it. I have searched all over the room and I can't find it anywhere."

"Not able to find it!" exclaimed Miss Simpkins aghast, "Could anybody have gone into the room while you were at the door with him?"

"No, Aunt; of that I'm certain. We weren't ten seconds at the door, and I went back to the room immediately afterwards."

"Then the fellow has taken it himself."

"Oh nonsense, Aunt. At least, if Edward did take it, he only did so as a joke."

"Joke!" cried Miss Simpkins. "A funny kind of joke. Was it a joke that made him pretend to drop his hat and stick on the floor, so that in picking them up he could clandestinely pick the bank-note up also? Was it a joke that made him hurry out of the house without telling you that he was taking the note with him. The

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"Isabella Thwaites."

fellow is as cunning as he is dishonest. He knows that if I were to prosecute him for theft he could defend himself by saying that the money was given to him."

"Oh, Aunt, don't talk in that way," exclaimed Edith, angrily. "Edward is a high-minded, honourable man."

"Will nothing convince you?" said Miss Simpkins impatiently. "It is clear that the man took the money; and it is also clear, from the way he picked it up and from his not telling you about it, that he did not take it merely as a joke."

"Then he did not take it at all," cried Edith, thus driven to bay.

"Prove that to me, and I'll consent to your marrying him, and settle five hundred a year on you as well," said Miss Simpkins.

"Very well, Aunt, remember you said that," replied Edith, as she left the room to avoid losing her temper altogether.

Her Aunt's reasoning convinced her that Dr. Graham could not have taken the note by way of a joke. Under the circumstances the natural conclusion, *for her*, was that he did not take it at all.

Accordingly, she dressed as quickly as possible, and started for Dr. Graham's house in the hope that he would be able to make some suggestion by which the mystery might be explained.

He was busily engaged at the surgery when she arrived, but after a few minutes he came into the parlour where she was waiting for him.

"Oh Edward, dear, that note—what can have become of it?" was all she could say when he entered the room.

"What note—the one Miss Simpkins threw on the floor?" was the answer.

"Yes, dear; we can't find it, at least I can't. I searched the room carefully, and I can't find it anywhere."

"Tell me all about it; I don't understand," he said, sitting down, and speaking in a grave tone.

She recounted very graphically what had happened since he left the house—omitting, of course, any mention of the interpretation which her Aunt put upon the matter.

"This is certainly very mysterious," he said when she had told her tale. "You went back to the drawing-room directly I left the house?"

"Yes."

"Nobody could possibly have gone into the room while we were in the hall. That is very certain. The windows, I remember, were all shut, so that it could not have been blown away; besides, there is no wind to-day. The paper fell near my feet, fully three yards away from your Aunt. She got up immediately afterwards and left the room. She did not take the note, you did not take it, and I did not take it, then how did it get away?"

He paused for a minute as if he were in deep thought, and then said:—

"I think the best thing we can do is to go round to Mr. Adams. He is a detective and a very clever man. I know him through some cases in which I have had to give evidence. We had better go at once."

They started accordingly to see Mr. Adams, and in a few minutes arrived at the door of his house, which was not very far away from where Dr. Graham lived.

Mr. Inspector Adams (retired), the successful unraveller of a thousand mysteries and the terror of all criminals, was a tall, spare man of about fifty, with lanky, grey hair, slight, grey whiskers, and a pair of very quick, keen, dark eyes. He occupied the upper part of a house over a hosier's shop, and received them in a neatly furnished little parlour, in which there were several bookcases filled with well-bound volumes.

When Dr. Graham had told him the purpose of their visit, he courteously asked Miss Leyton to tell him what she remembered about the matter. During the time she was speaking he listened apparently in an absent-minded manner, as if he were thinking of something else at the same time. It was only when, by a few pertinent questions, he elicited the material circumstances of the case, that the note had fallen near Dr. Graham's feet, that Miss Simpkins had left the room immediately after the paper had fallen from her hand, and that nobody had come into the room afterwards until Miss Leyton had searched in vain for the missing note, it was only then that Inspector Adams said:—

"I think we had better go at once to Merton Lodge. I should like to see the drawing-room. You say that nobody else but the three of you were in it?"

"Yes," said Miss Leyton and Dr. Graham together.

"Well, it's very odd; but we had better go at once."

"But have you any idea what can have become of the note?" asked Miss Leyton.

"Not at present," replied Inspector Adams, gravely; "but I never even try to understand a matter of the kind until I am actually on the premises. You see there is all the difference in the world between merely hearing generally that such and such a thing has happened, and being told that a certain thing has happened in a certain place when you are in the place yourself, and able to compare everything in it with the story you are told. We had better start at once."

On leaving Inspector Adams's house they hailed a cab, and in a few minutes the three of them were deposited at Merton Lodge.

It was about four o'clock when they arrived at the house, and Miss Simpkins was sitting on a sofa in the drawing-room reading a novel, while, with her left hand, she fondled Tarleton, who lay by her side.

"Oh, Aunt," said Edith as she came into the room, "Dr. Graham does not know anything about the note, so we have brought—hush, Algie!" (Tarleton had begun to bark furiously at the the sight of a stranger) "we have brought Inspector Adams, a detective officer, to see if he can throw any light on the matter, Hush! hush! you bold dog."

"You have frightened my poor love!" exclaimed Miss Simpkins, gazing defiance at the intruders, while she tried to pacify the animal, who kept on barking at Inspector Adams in a paroxysm of terror or anger.

"Are you quite sure, Miss, that there was nobody else in the room but this lady and Dr. Graham when the note fell on the floor?" said the detective to Miss Leyton.

"Quite sure," replied Miss Leyton.

"Not even this young gentleman?" said Inspector Adams, interrogatively, pointing to Tarleton as he spoke.

"And what if Mr. Tarleton were in the room?" cried Miss Simpkins, loosing her hold of the dog as she spoke, and confronting Inspector Adams with an air of majestic wrath, "I suppose my dog may be in my room if I wish it. He's not a thief, is he, eh?"

"Oh no, ma'am, of course not; but ——"

There was suddenly a piercing squeal from Tarleton, who had approached close to Inspector Adams, accompanied by a shriek of "Unhand that dog, sir!" from Miss Simpkins. It was too late, however, for in a second the detective had caught the dog—who kicked and barked violently—by the back of the neck, and was holding him before the window with one hand, while with the

MEDAL OF THE SANITARY INSTITUTE, 1888.

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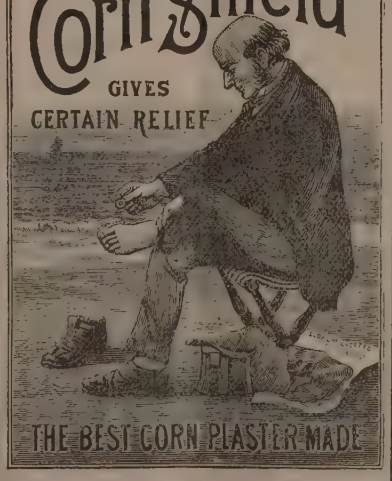

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other he held his lower jaw open and carefully examined his teeth.

"Ah! I thought so," he said after a moment's inspection. "I think this is something like a bit of what we are looking for."

He took a tiny scrap of paper from between two of the dog's teeth as he spoke, and released the animal, who ran howling to his mistress.

"My poor darling, Algie, the wretches would like to kill you," cried Miss Simpkins when she regained possession of her treasure, who buried himself in her lap, panting and sobbing as if his heart would break.

"I am afraid he has killed himself, ma'am," said the detective gravely. "He can't live much over to-night. It will be a very painful death."

"Merciful heavens! what do you mean?" Miss Simpkins almost shrieked.

"He has swallowed the bank-note, ma'am," replied the astute Adams. "It is in his stomach now, but in an hour or so it will pass into what the doctors call his "alimentary canal," and then all the faculty of physicians can't save him. Doctor Graham will tell you that, ma'am."

"Certainly," assented Dr. Graham, "the paper will probably produce strangulation, which must end in mortification."

"Oh, doctor Graham, doctor Graham, I beg your pardon a thousand times for what I said. I did not mean it. Edith will tell you that I have withdrawn all opposition. Oh, do for heaven's sake save my poor darling," cried Miss Simpkins.

Those who know the affection which an old lady like Miss Simpkins is capable of bearing for her dog will probably be able to surmise the impassioned strain in which she besought Dr. Graham to save the life of her pet. But it would be too ridiculous to write down all that she said while Tarleton, who had become infected with her terror, nestled into her bosom trembling and crying like a child.

"I shall get some sulphate of zinc," said Dr. Graham, "it is the best emetic I can give him," saying which, he put on his hat and went to a chemist's shop in a neighbouring street, from whence he returned shortly with a bottle containing several drachms of sulphate of zinc.

It was not very easy to administer the dose to Tarleton. In the first place, he had to be got away from Miss Simpkins, and this, in itself, entailed a good deal of trouble, besides a perfect uproar from both of them. Then he kicked, and bit, and struggled so desperately that, if it had not been for the skilful manipulation of Inspector Adams, it is very doubtful whether the emetic could have been got down his throat at all. At last, however, the operation was completed. A servant was directed to place a cloth on the floor behind a screen, and on this cloth Tarleton (who was a well-bred and well-trained dog though a little snappish as most pampered individuals are) in a few minutes deposited the remains of the note.

"I think this is a practical confession of the felony," said Inspector Adams as he took up what remained of the note from the cloth. "Yes," he continued when he had opened the ball of paper, "the number and the signature are all right, so the money can be recovered from the bank. I thought somebody else must have been in the room, but I did not think I should have to arrest such a nice well-behaved dog for the robbery."

"He's not to be arrested! He did not know what he was doing!" shouted Miss Simpkins, catching Tarleton up off the floor and clasping him to her bosom.

I suppose, in the excitement of the moment, she thought the remark was made seriously.

Afterwards, when her agitation had calmed down a little, she thanked the Inspector most warmly for his sagacity and presented him with twenty pounds, partly in acknowledgment of the skilful way in which he had unravelled the mystery, and partly for the larger sum which he had saved her. But I am bound to admit that both she and Tarleton breathed much more freely when the detective had taken his departure.

"Dr. Graham, you will not expect an old woman like me to apologize for the nonsense I have talked this afternoon," she said, when Inspector Adams had left the house. "I have told Edith what I shall do; and you will dine here, I hope, on Christmas day, and be married to her early in the new year."

Edith Leyton became Edith Graham in the following January.

Her husband is now one of the leading physicians in the West End; and his patients, though less numerous, are more lucrative.

"Mr. Algernon Tarleton" sleeps peacefully in the back green of Merton Lodge, beneath the verdant sod; but a marble gravestone which bears witness to his many virtues contains no mention of his felonous ingestion and part-digestion of the Hundred-Pound Note.

SONG OF THE BANANA PEEL.

LIKE a bar of the beaten gold
I gleam in the summer's sun;
I am little, I know, but I think I can throw
A man that will weigh a ton.
I send out no challenges bold,
I blow me no vaunting horn,
But foolish is he who treadeth on me
He'll wish he had ne'er been born.

Like the flower of the field, vain man
Goeth forth at the break of day;
But when he shall feel my grip on his heel,
Like the stubble he fadeth away.
For I lift him high up in the air,
With his heels where his head ought to be;
With a down-coming crash he maketh his mash,
And I know he's clean gone upon me.

I am scorned by the man who buys me;
I am modest and quiet and meek;
Though my talents are few, yet the work that I do
Has oft made the cellar doors creak.
I'm a blood-red republican born,
And a Nihilist fearless I be:
Though the head wear a crown, I would bring its pride down,
If it set its proud heel upon me.

IN a primary school: "Victor," asked the teacher, "What animal shows the greatest attachment to man?" Victor thinks a moment and then replies: "The leech, sir."

THERE was once a Scotch gentleman who had lived a very careless life, and as his end drew near he asked his minister whether it would help him in the next world if he gave £1,000 to the Church? The reply he got was: "Aweel, I canna just say that, but the experiment wad be weel worth tryin'.

MRS. BONDCLIPPER: "Doctor, what do you think is the matter with me?" Doctor: "I am inclined to think your blood is not pure. I'll have to give you something to purify your blood." Mrs. Bondclipper, haughtily: "You are probably not aware that I belong to one of the old Dutch families of New York."

CHRISTMAS COLDS AND HOW TO CURE THEM.

STRANGE inconsistent creatures we, no mistake! Punctilious in the care of the outward man, meanwhile disorganizing the liver; careful not to irritate the skin, while inflaming the stomach beyond measure; passing laws against poisoning, and poisoning our infants with starchy foods and ourselves with over-eating, vitiated air, and in a thousand and one other ways beside; seeking happiness intently, and doing the very things which remove it from us. For this reason it is, that of all the great men who have walked and taught upon this earth, to the writer's mind, none was greater than Epicurus—not the Epicurus of popular misconception and distortion, but Epicurus as he really was.

It is a popular notion that the original Epicureans were gluttons, while gluttons they certainly were not. However much they may have degenerated in after time, they were at first a pure sect. They held that pain was a calamity. How could people holding such a doctrine advocate excesses in any sphere of human experience? Continuous pleasure (so far as it is possible to mankind) must be dependent upon good health, and good health upon moderation in all things. The man who feels he has a coiling python in his stomach will hardly have a Merry Christmas, any more than the woman who suffers with a pleuritic pain at every breath she takes. At this season, then, as always, we shall deem it a misfortune if, perchance, any of our reader friends feel a twinging nerve, a burdened stomach, an embarrassed lung.

Many a one would be better off if, after his Christmas dinner, like the ancients, he, took an emetic, or some assafœtida. Too great a deviation from the normal lines of living must react unpleasantly. To crowd the stomach may mean not to crowd *it* alone, but every cell of every tissue in the body. The furred tongue, white of the eye tinged with yellow, muddy-hued complexion, bad taste in the mouth in the morning, all these tell the simple story of something more than a strained liver working imperfectly: they tell of poisoned blood and breath, irritated nerves, weakened muscles, and a general impairment throughout the body. Either there has been great or long-continued over-eating, or something has been taken which has tended to impede the emunctories in their work, and to retain in the system what should have been thrown out. The festivities of Christmas-tide are apt to be indulged in so freely that, dietetically, the results may continue in undesirable sequence over many a day. We hear of no *great eaters* in these days, such as we read of as belonging to the good old times, and accordingly the habit of taking an after-dinner pill is becoming daily more and more obsolete. If our readers would take, during Christmas week, a Cascara Tabloid every other night, and after their hearty meals one or two Pepsin Tabloids, they would escape many unpleasantnesses that will be the stock and store of not a few. Activity and pure air are grand preventives and cures of dyspepsia. "Live on sixpence a day, and earn it," was the prescription Abernethy gave the dyspeptic duchess.

That havoc-making, ever-present disease, consumption, is the infliction made upon the physically unworthy. No matter what the causes, when one becomes mentally, physically, or morally unworthy, operations begin for his removal. We call this inexorable law. When Dame Nature would remove one with consumption she usually strikes first the lungs or the stomach. Many a fellow of seeming promise, struck with a cold these wintry days, will succumb from consumption within a year. Watch well the Christmas colds; they help to make the churchyard full. One of the best of cures for a cold is pure air, and those endeavouring to cure one in a stuffy room will find this a useful hint. Warm dry feet, flannel clothing by night and day, an equable temperature, and a large sleeping-room, these are always desiderata. For an ordinary sore throat nothing is better than the "Voice Tabloids;" while for the irritation and weakness due to over-use of the voice the five-grain Ammonium Tabloids, sucked upon the back of the tongue—not near the tip, or there will be a twinge—will do much good.

The subjects of chronic catarrh should have at hand a Vereker Ammonium Chloride Inhaler, to use three times a day. In all colds, an ounce of prevention is worth many pounds of cure.

WRINKLES.

No matter how lightly rests the hand of Time upon us, wrinkles come at last. Town life, with its thousand and one demands upon the nervous and physical resources of the individual, tends to bring them prematurely. So does business, with its worries; civilization, with its cares. Milton speaks of "wrinkled care," and Shakespeare of the "hollow eye and wrinkled brow."

A passing glance at the anatomy of the skin shows that in animals with backbones there is an outer horny skin layer and an underlying soft one (called the chorion). Between the cells of the horny layer are tiny tubes, which dip inward and roll upon themselves like a ball of twine. These are sweat-glands and ducts. Kraus estimates that there are 2,500,000 of them, with a secretory surface of 1,080 square metres, equivalent to nearly 12,000 square feet. More wonderful does all this appear when it is recollected that each coil of sweat-gland is wound about with a microscopic artery. Now these glands are thickest upon the palms of the hands, and feet, and upon the forehead—in just the places where wrinkles come thickest and fast. It will be recognized that the solid, elastic, easily-movable under-skin affords a good protection against external injuries; while the outer horny layer is capable of resisting to a certain degree thermal and even climatic actions. But there is a more important matter still; one so noteworthy that we quote from the great physiologist (Landois) the following upon it:—"*A thin layer of fatty matter protects the free surface of the epidermis from the macerating action of fluids, and from the disintegrating action of the air.*" It is generally known that salts or vegetable poisons in water do not pass through the skin, for the film of fat prevents absorption. But "if the fat be removed from the skin by alcohol, ether, or chloroform, absorption may occur in a few minutes."

Pregnant causes of wrinkles are soaps, cosmetics, and lotions. Whenever the skin is cleansed with soap, it is by the removal of the oil upon the surface; and, as we have already pointed out, this renders the skin liable to all the mischief wind, and heat, or cold can do. A word on wrinkles would not be complete if it did not refer to the cosmetics which have first beautified, and in time rolled the skin into corrugations. Society, all too frail, offers, alas! its grateful smiles when

> "A gay perfumer comes,
> On whose soft cheek his own cosmetic blooms."

Martial, the first of epigrammatists, writing at Rome in the first century, says: "Go where we will one smells the shop of Cosmo," who was the fashionable perfumer of the city in that generation. And we may here incidentally observe that it seems more likely that the

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A VISIT TO THE MEDICAL BATTERY COMPANY.

MR. HARNESS ON ELECTROPATHY.

The motto adopted by the Medical Battery Company is that "The Germ of All Life is Electricity," and it is upon this assumption that Mr. C. B. Harness has built up one of the most prosperous businesses in London,—a business that gives daily evidence of increasing popularity with the public, particularly that part of it which is most severely afflicted with the ills that flesh is heir to.

A representative who called at the now celebrated premises at the corner of Rathbone-place, Oxford-street, was shown over the establishment by Mr. Harness, who courteously explained the various methods adopted by him for the relief of human suffering and the renewal of impaired vigour. Our representative says: When I called at 52, Oxford-street, and sent in my name to the founder and directing spirit of the Medical Battery Company, I found, as I might have anticipated, that Mr. C. B. Harness was engaged nearly an hour with patients who had come to consult him respecting the treatment of their various ailments. I had to wait my turn, which was some way down the list, and was shown into

THE WAITING SALOON.

This room alone is worth a special visit. It is a lofty and beautifully-lighted apartment, some sixty feet in length by about twenty-five in width. It is elegantly furnished, and provided with means of making the time pass pleasantly for the most querulous invalid. Here it is that Mr. Harness is in the habit of delivering his lectures (whenever he has the time) and holding discussions on the mysteries of electrical science, and a room better suited to such purposes it would be difficult to imagine. But its chief attraction is the superb statuary which lines its walls, and is a splendid art exhibition in itself. *Twenty thousand pounds' worth* of sculpture from the studio of Mr. Charles Lawes, in marble and terra-cotta, is gathered in this one apartment.

Whilst I was admiring it, Mr. C. B. Harness entered the room, and I was not long in discovering that the purchase of high-class works of art is the favourite relaxation of his daily life. But I was soon drawn away from this elegant apartment to have a look at the more practical side of the establishment.

A SEA-BREEZE IN OXFORD-STREET.

My first experience of the many ingenious inventions which Mr. Harness has patented was a decidedly pleasant one. In his private consulting-room stood a large centre-table, and at one end of this table was fixed a machine which my readers will excuse me describing when I tell them that my knowledge of electrical science is on a par with a South Sea Islander's notion of skating on ice. I can, however, relate what occurred to me.

I was placed in a chair, supported on insulators, facing the machine. Mr. Sharman, the advertising manager for Mr. Harness, uncovered a new electrical machine, which produced an admirable show of lightning in miniature and at a comfortable distance from my person. In his hand, Mr. Harness held a cylinder which was connected with the machine, and from this cylinder proceeded a delicious breeze charged with ozone, and smelling as sweet and refreshing as a breath from the western sea. It played around my face and through my hair with a delightful sense of freshness and vigour.

This machine has just been patented, and is an implacable foe to headache and lassitude of every description. If Mr. Harness could be induced to open a series of establishments in London where "chippy" men could be played upon by such machines after a late "sit-up" he would confer a boon upon convivial humanity and double the income of the Medical Battery Company at one and the same time.

A WIDE REPUTATION.

Mr. Harness has already been recognized in this capacity not only in England, his native land, but on the Continent as well. He has had the Order of the Red Cross of Belgium conferred upon him, and has been presented with a handsome gold medal by the French Government. Written testimonials from patients who have been benefited by his treatment after ordinary methods have failed pour in upon him every day. I was privileged to peruse some from persons whose names (were I permitted to publish them) would rather astonish my readers.

"Yes, I had a good deal of opposition to fight against from the medical profession when I first started in London, more than half a dozen years ago," was Mr. Harness's reply to a question on that point. "But I have succeeded in living it down, and now many of the most eminent physicians recommend their patients to me, as you will have seen from the letters I have shown you."

And this reminds me, by the way, that Mr. Harness has suffered the keenest annoyance from a misunderstanding which had somehow got abroad as to his nationality.

"I AM AN ENGLISHMAN."

he exclaimed, in referring to this subject, "and am, of course, proud of it, as every Englishman should be. I have been accused of being an American. As a matter of fact, I've only visited America for a few weeks on professional business. I am a native of Yorkshire, and the owner of property in Nottinghamshire. I haven't a single American in my employ."

After this very commendable outburst of patriotism, Mr. Harness took me round a large number of rooms set apart for different purposes. Consulting-rooms, electrical bathrooms, operating-rooms, rooms where patients undergo the electro-massage method of cure introduced by himself; and in all these places there was evident that ceaseless throb of activity which is the sure indication of a thriving business.

ELECTROPATHIC BELTS.

The number of electropathic belts, knee-caps, chest-protectors, &c., which were being packed up to be despatched to patients all over the world, was simply confusing to any one, like myself, unaccustomed to such a sight. These patent inventions are the specialty upon which Mr. Harness most prides himself.

"You see these rows of small metal plates inside the belt," said the inventor, as he took one in his hand. "Well, when the belt is put on, these come next the skin, and, by the action of the acids of the body upon them, a gentle and continuous current of electricity is kept up all the time the belt is worn. In a large number of cases this is sufficient to achieve the desired result.

"In other instances which demand a stronger current I use my patent Continuous Current Batteries. These entirely supersede the old-fashioned galvanic batteries, the sudden shock from which used to be such a terror to nervous patients. There is no shock at all with my new batteries."

A practical experiment on my part convinced me of this agreeable fact. There was not the slightest inconvenience attached to the sensation which I underwent, although the machine to which my vile body was attached had sufficient strength to ring a bell and to light a powerful incandescent lamp.

THE ZANDER INSTITUTE.

In the basement of the building Mr. Harness has fitted up, at great expense, a large saloon for the reception of the mechanical appliances of the above celebrated institute, which have been purchased by the Medical Battery Company. These machines are the invention of Dr. Gustave Zander, an eminent Swedish physician, and have already been in use, to a limited extent, in this country, for some years. They are clever mechanical contrivances for the purpose of carrying out what is known as "the movement cure" for muscular diseases of various kinds. The Medical Battery Company has acquired the right in these machines at a cost of nearly £10,000, and are now in full operation. Amongst the most interesting of these machines is that which gives a precise mechanical imitation of horse exercise, from the gentle amble of the country parson's cob up to the exhilarating but somewhat risky movements of the Australian buck-jumper.

But time and space fail me to tell of the many wonderful things to be seen at 52, Oxford-street, London, which is, as its founder pithily puts it, "the only genuine electro-medical establishment in the world."

word cosmetics comes from "Cosmo" than from the Greek, as ordinarily attributed. As in Rome, so in Greece, cosmetics held sway, while the Spartans and those of Thebes would have none of them. Under Solon, the abuse of cosmetics had become so great as to require legislation; but this was of no avail. Socrates raved against the cosmetics of his day, and said that philosopher and slave when perfumed smelt both alike. All this was some 2,000 years ago. Has the world grown wiser? In this respect, we fear not much. In those days "every part of the body had its particular application: mint for the arms, *palm oil for the cheeks and breasts*, a pomade of marjoram for the eye-brows and hair, ground ivy for the neck." In these times the cosmetics are made with arsenic, lead, mercurial compounds, which injure directly the skin-cells and tend to shrivel them. The pulverulent cosmetics occlude the pores of the skin with their gritty insoluble constituents.

When the skin is wrinkling, it will invariably be found to be losing its elasticity and perfectly healthy hue. Usually, it will appear a trifle dry. For this reason, unctuous materials have, with perfect propriety, been used to postpone the advent of the wrinkles.

From the foregoing it may be readily gathered that the custom of the moderns is to extract the oil from the skin, and thus expose it to every climatic calamity. To bathe the skin, say, with an alabaster box of precious ointment, was the ancient custom. Oil protects the skin from wind and weather, and is indispensable to its preservation. The American women are fast ruining their complexions with soaps, cosmetics, and hot stoves.

It is as curious as it is interesting to note that what the ancient Roman ladies used to prevent wrinkles was called Esypus (a form of wool fat), and was none other than the great discovery of our time known as Lanoline, which science and art have purified into the most innocuous nutritive and preservative for the skin. It is a clarified fat obtained from lamb's wool. Modern ladies have been using a Lanoline Cold Cream, or Toilet Lanoline, for the same purpose as their ancient sisters, and, judging from the reports appearing in the press from time to time, with most satisfactory results. As Lanoline is the natural nutrient oil of the skin, it is probably safe to say that if it will not prevent wrinkles or remove them—nothing will.

"THE doctor said he'd put me on my feet again in two weeks." "Well, didn't he do it?" "He did, indeed; I had to sell my horse and buggy to foot the bill."

A MAN in a prayer-meeting once prayed for the absent who were "prostrated on beds of sickness and sofas of wellness."

WOMAN (who has given a cold bite to a tramp): "You don't look very healthy." Tramp: "No, ma'am, it's indigestion, caused by eating between meals — other people's meals."

WIFE (in hoarse whisper): "Moichael! Moichael! wake up! Thur's a murtherin' thafe in the room!" Michael: "Whist, now, Rosie; be aisy. I hev me oi on'm, an' ef he foinds onything, I'll git up an' take it froom 'im."

"STOP smoking," said a doctor to an ailing patient the other day, "and it will lengthen your days." The patient stopped. The doctor's prediction was verified. The first day, the patient declares, was as long as his whole previous life.

THE PREVENTION OF NERVOUSNESS IN CHILDREN.

BY WALTER LESTER CARR, M.D.,

Physician to the Out-Patient Department St. Mary's Free Hospital f Children, and to the Babies' Shelter, Church of the Holy Communion, New York.

THE inheritance of many American children is a sad one. The so-called "American disease,"—nervousness,—gives the little children a poor foundation on which to build physical health and mental strength. The wear and tear of business, the excitements and dissipations of social life, and the strife to get ahead, so common among all classes, deprive the men and women of this century of the vitality that they should possess in order to transmit health to their offspring.

"The education of a child should be begun a hundred years before it is born," but unfortunately the years preceding the birth of thousands of young Americans have passed. However, this is no reason why we should neglect the mothers of to-day and the children of the future.

Before the advent of the baby the mother should be encouraged in every way to cultivate an evenness of temper and feeling. It may be hard for a woman who has never given her own individuality one moment of quiet thought, to think of her actions and passions as influencing the future of her baby yet unborn,—not only her baby, but succeeding generations,—for good or evil. Many a woman is flattered because she is vivacious. Little do the admirers know that the quickness of perception and brilliance of repartee are often the manifestations of uneven mental power, and that the excitements of an hour are followed by a day of depression, the result of a badly balanced nervous system. Against such irregularities the young mother should be guarded, for although on both father and mother rest the responsibilities of parentage, yet on the latter falls more of the double burden of the formation of body and mind. She should have duties that will occupy her attention in a methodical way. The reading of good books, intelligent conversation, and a calm, dispassionate judgment of what is read and heard should be cultivated. There should be an avoidance, on the one hand, of the scintillations of society gatherings, and on the other of the gloom of loneliness so often felt by the young mother. Out-of-door exercise, which, if possible, should be had in the country, is a great sedative for nervous women. Good, wholesome food is an important factor in the comfort of the expectant mother.

When the new life is added to the home, what care is necessary to ensure its protection? If the mother has governed her imaginations and fears, she can direct the management of her infant from its birth with the feeling that to her is given the divine power of motherhood. This she cannot do if she has yielded to every passing whim and caprice of fancy. A baby is at first hardly more than an animal. It needs to be fed and warmed. Soon, however, it shows the attributes of a forming mind. It cries when distressed; it moves its hands and feet, and smiles with delight at the approach of one it knows. In other ways it evinces its appreciation of surroundings. A watchful mother who attends to her baby's wants, notices these indications of growing power, and plans day and night for the happiness of the loved one. She understands that the evidences of interest that the baby manifests show what its brain is doing; show that the brain is growing and learning. Growing more in a day than it will afterwards in a year; learning at a rate beyond our calculation. It is becoming acquainted with

the form and face of its mother; the feeling of hunger and thirst, the sensation of pain, the handling of the nurse, and the light from the window. All these require activity of the nervous system, at first in an automatic way, but gradually the brain develops its marvellous capacity for storing away in its recesses useful information for all the years of earthly existence, that can be drawn on as was the widow's cruse of oil,—a never-failing supply, depending only on how carefully the storing is done.

We must note a difference between this activity of the brain that we so much want and the irritability that we should so carefully guard against. If the mother has controlled her own actions and governed her passions, then she has aided in laying the corner-stone in the building of a brain that will stand the strain of later life. If not, she has helped in the erection of a structure that will crumble to dust in the storms of an early maturity.

We can give but a single example of how a thoughtless mother helps in destroying the sensitive nervous organization of her child, and adds to the dangers it will encounter in the whirl of nineteenth-century existence. The mother goes to the theatre when her baby is a few weeks old. Returning to her home at midnight, excited by her interest in the emotions she has seen depicted on the stage, she gives the baby the nourishment it is fretting to receive. The mother is not in a condition to attend to her maternal duty, and the baby is tired from hunger and crying. The result is that the milk does not agree with the infant stomach. The night is one of anxiety and wakefulness. Perhaps, for the sake of quiet, an anodyne or some soothing mixture is administered. The next day the baby is heavy and dull. For two or three days following there is indigestion, and the baby loses its bright happy expression. All this reacts on the brain. The association between the stomach and the brain is a close one. In fact it is so close that even careful physicians have said that children have "brain fever" when they had only disordered digestion. The irritation of the stomach interferes with the nourishment of the brain, that needs such a constant supply of good blood in its growth. Irritation of this kind, if continued, depresses the vitality of the whole body, but particularly of the brain.

If instead of witnessing the theatrical representation, so often of unreal life, the mother had remained quietly at home the result would have been different. The child would have been nursed at its accustomed hour, then would have slept the calm rest of healthy infancy, and awakened with the brain active from the nourishment it had received, ready to take in and store away varied observations useful from that day, a never-decreasing fund of information. It would not have suffered a loss of equilibrium of its nerve centres, but would have retained a calmness of mind that we consider so necessary to the future health and happiness of our race.

A mother who is of a nervous temperament often tries one of two ways in the government of a child that gives way to violent outbreaks of passion because it is thwarted and cannot do as it pleases. She yields, and pursues the peace-at-any price policy, or she punishes it. In either case there is no gain. If the former course be pursued, the poor mother can but look forward to another outburst on the slightest provocation. If the latter be thought justifiable, the child's temper may be broken, but so will its spirit, and it will not dare to ask for anything dear to its childish heart. If the mother has attempted to control her own feelings she can soon manage her child without giving way on either side, and as she gains in firmness, she will notice that the baby is sensible of the evenness of her disposition.

Violent passions have violent endings, and it is well to consider the difference in the children born and educated amid the excitements of the city and those reared in the quiet of country homes. The children of the city and the country are often contrasted to the disparagement of the latter, who are said to be dull and slow. This is an error in observation, and shows a want of appreciation of their early training and surroundings.

The city boy is precocious, and is thought "smart." By inheritance and teachings his nervous system has been kept in a constant state of excitability. Very little bodily or mental energy is stored up, most of it is used at once, and often the future is drawn on for oil to keep the small light from flickering and going out. The example of the nursery is constantly before him. His mother could not control her feelings and passions, and neither can he. He has to contend with an imperfect physical development, the result of the want of exercise and fresh air, and the irritability of a brain showing the weakness of inheritance and of education. The nervousness and impressionability of the city man explain why as a young man he is quick and easily obtains a position, but frequently cannot keep to the mark. He cannot stand the wear and tear. At the age that he falls by the wayside the country-bred man begins to show his strength and his ability to use the stored-up energies of his early life. His has been an infancy of quiet and repose. A mother strong and healthy, with none of the worries of fashion or society, has given him maternal care.

If her mind has not aspired to higher spheres, it has, at least, been free from the passions engendered by luxury and excitement. So her child grows up as the proud possessor of a brain that has the strength to withstand prolonged and exhaustive efforts. Such men hold the destinies of nations in politics and business, but they, too, must beware lest they destroy their own strength by not husbanding it. Their potentiality must be reserved for their heirs. If it is not, their daughters, the mothers of the next generation, will be the excitable, nervous women, always up-hill and down-dale, who are the dread of the physician and the bane of the family.

If the mothers of to-day will pay more attention than they do to their own and their children's bodies and minds, the health and happiness of future generations will be assured. The "bundle of nerves" will be read of as a phase of nineteenth-century weakness. The childless woman and the enervated man will give place to the healthy matron with her blooming daughters, and to the hearty husband surrounded by ruddy-cheeked sons.—*Babyhood.*

A BOY will eat and a boy will drink,
And a boy will play all day;
But a boy won't work and a boy won't think,
Because he ain't built that way.

A girl will sing and a girl will dance,
And a girl will work crochet;
But she can't throw a stone and hit a church,
Because she ain't built that way.

ONE who knows says a physician's work fills six feet of ground, but a dentist's fills an acher.

MRS. NOSEUP had always contended that her husband's tobacco habit was a vile and injurious one. "There," said Mr. Noseup, turning from his scientific journal, "it says here that there are no microbes to be found in tobacco." "That's where the microbe shows his good sense, Mr. Noseup."

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BAYLEY & CO.,

ESTABLISHED 1739,

Perfumers to the Royal Family and Foreign Courts,

SOLE MANUFACTURERS OF THE ORIGINAL

ESS. BOUQUET AND THE CELEBRATED SPERMACETI SOAP.

PERFUMES.

Bouquet Victoria.
Jockey Club.
Army and Navy.
Prince of Wales.
Ceylon.
Reveur.
Marechale.
Empress.
Accession, one of their Especial Manufacture, &c., &c.

SPERMACETI SHAVING TABLETS, AND CREAM.

LAVENDER WATER.

THE supreme excellence of this Water is testified to by all who use it, and is specially recommended by the Medical Profession for sponging all irritated parts, especially in the case of Skin Eruptions; it is not only a Royal Perfume of the highest class, but gives instant relief from the most violent irritation.

HINDOO MARKING INK.

☞ BAYLEY & CO. having submitted this Ink to every known test, and the severest trials in domestic use, can fully assure the public that it far surpasses in quality every preparation of the kind within their knowledge, and that this Ink is really indelible. Price 1s. 6d., and in Cases, 2s.

SOAPS.

Otto of Rose.
Ess. Bouquet.
Violet. Sandal.
Almond.
Brown Windsor.
Glycerine.
Honey.
Cold Cream.
Highly recommended for their pureness.

BAYLEY'S REMEDIES.

THE TRUE POMMADE DIVINE.

THE great usefulness of this excellent Remedy, the POMMADE DIVINE, is so well known to all who have ever applied it, that no Encomium is necessary, and to those who are yet unacquainted with its virtues, a trial in the following cases will be its best recommendation :—

It is good for all sorts of Pains, Swellings, and Bruises occasioned by Falls, or otherwise, and will prevent the many bad consequences of such Accidents.
For a Cancer before it is broke, and for all sorts of Sore Breasts, particularly in a Lying-In.
For Stiff Necks and for Swellings occasioned by the Evil.
For a Gangrene, melting a little in a wound, without using a tent.
For Pains in the Stomach, rubbed in before the fire.
If a little be well rubbed in for a few minutes on a Bruise or Pinch, it will prevent Blackness. Will also cure Scalds and Burns, applied directly; and Rheumatic and Gouty Pains fixed in any part.

N.B.—No woollen of any kind should be applied to the parts affected, nor any metal (except silver) touch the Pommade. It will retain its virtues many years, and is therefore very useful to all Travellers, particularly Gentlemen of the Army and Navy.

HÆMORRHOIDS (or PILES).

As highly useful family medicines for that most distressing of complaints, Hæmorrhoids (or Piles), Bayley's Remedies have long enjoyed a high reputation. These remedies consist of specially prepared Pyrmont Tablets for invalid use, and of a Pyrmont Liniment for outward application. The tablets are compounded on the principle of the famous Pyrmont waters, which have been so highly recommended in cases of liver complaints, to the presence of which piles are often due, as well as in cases of the latter ailment itself. The liniment is made on allied principles. From an examination of these tablets and of the liniment, we are able to assert that they contain nothing calculated to produce untoward effects in the most delicate constitution, while they are likely to prove most beneficial in mild and severe cases alike. The ease with which the remedy may be taken—the tablets being agreeable to taste, and being merely allowed to dissolve in the mouth—will recommend this preparation in the eyes of those especially who have run the gamut of the many drugs employed for the cure of hæmorrhoids. We recommend a trial of Messrs. Bayley's Tablets, &c., which are to be obtained at 17, Cockspur-street, London, W.—*Vide* HEALTH, *April 8th*, 1887.

The Pure and well-known LAVENDER WATER and COLOGNE, as recommended by Dr. Andrew Wilson for the skin, cannot be too highly commended.

Prepared by BAYLEY & COMPY., Perfumers,

THE OLD CIVET CAT, 17, COCKSPUR-STREET, LONDON.

PRICE LISTS FREE ON APPLICATION.

JOKES—MEDICAL AND SEASONABLE.

A SLIGHT MISUNDERSTANDING.—A young lady went to a drug store and had a prescription filled. "How much is it?" inquired the young lady. "One and twopence," said the clerk. "But I have only one shilling with me," replied the customer; "can't you let me have it for that?" "No, ma'am; but you can pay me twopence when you come in again," said the clerk. "But suppose I were to die," said the lady jocularly. "Well, it wouldn't be any great loss," was the smiling response. And immediately the smiling clerk gathered, from the indignant flash of the lady's face, that he had been misunderstood, and before he could assure her that it was the little balance, and not her, that was no great loss, she had bounced out at a go-as-you-please gait, and was beyond the sound of his voice.

* * *

A GENTLEMAN took an unopened bottle of champagne from a table, and offered bets to any amount—small ones for preference, as the trick was admittedly a "sell"—that he would drink a glass of champagne out of that particular bottle without drawing or piercing the cork, without causing it to be drawn or pierced, and without breaking or in any way injuring the bottle. The utter impossibility of accomplishing such a thing might have induced the incautious to bet against its being done; thereupon the holder simply turned it upside down, poured a glass of champagne into the hollow at the bottom, and undoubtedly drank it from and out of the bottle.

* * *

MARK TWAIN once stopped at the house of a friend who had seven children, one of whom, a boy, was at the time suffering from a scurf on his head. The boy's mother was telling Twain about it, and asking him what she had better do. Twain inquired very carefully about when the scurf first appeared, what the symptoms were, and what remedies had been employed. Then, after thinking a moment, he ran his fingers through his hair, and said, "Try sandpaper."

* * *

A BOY'S COMPOSITION.—At a recent meeting of the Old Seminary boys at Indianapolis, the following, on a time-stained sheet of paper, was produced and read as a composition of half a century ago, the author being at that time of the tender age of ten years:—"A Eagle and Lion—A eagle and lion is the King of birds and beasts. They is two kines of eagle, the bald eagle and the gole. There was wunce a gole eagle here on a stemebote and I saw it. Nat Cox kild a ball eagle at the ford tother day. They bill thare nes on the pint of the Aligane mauntanes, fur John Elder tole me so, out of shinny clubs. I wish they was a nes on Nole's hill so we cood git clubs esy. Wunce a ball eagle took a boy to its nes in pants, and its papa and mamma ran up thare and foun him nockin the young eagles about with a shinny club and whorain for joy. And this is all about a eagle. Now I will tell you about a lion. Buffin says a lion kin kill a lefant with his pa, and kin ete anything cept injun ruber wax. A lion will ete anybody less his name is dannel. I wisht they had cald me dannel, then Ike Key's dog lion cuddent bite me, and that is all about a lion."

* * *

THERE is one admirable feature about a wire fence. The patent-medicine man can't paint a legend on it in regard to his liver cure.

WHAT'S NOT IN A NAME?—Little boy (School Board again) to chemist: "Please, I want a penn'orth of methyl-phenyl-otolylpyrrolin-carboxylic acid for father's chilblain, and three-'aporth of amidomethamidoperchloromethylcanidine for baby's cold."

* * *

"WHAT book has helped you most in life?" I asked my friend, as home we took our way one day, and he replied, "My pocketbook."

* * *

HE: "Dese hear cars am mighty dangerous, and hit's mosty de last car what's smashed up." She: "Why don't dey leave off de last car den?"

* * *

AN ignorant old man, listening to the eulogy of an American statesman, was moved to enthusiasm in his description of it to his wife. "Malviny!" he exclaimed, "it was grand. It was the most glowing paregoric I have ever had 'casion for to listen to!"

* * *

HIS SCALP WAS ALL THERE.—Old Gentleman: "Here, sir! you are a regular fraud. My hair's coming out as bad as ever. This stuff isn't worth a continental." Barber: "I didn't promise that it would keep your hair from coming out. I said it would preserve your scalp. Your scalp's all there, isn't it?"

* * *

SCENE, Grammar School. Dialogue between teacher and Johnny. Teacher: "What is the future of 'he drinks?'" Johnny: "He is drunk."

* * *

YOUNG PHYSICIAN: "How are you getting on this morning?" Patient: "I hardly know; pretty slowly, I fancy." Y. P.: "Did you take the prescription I left?" P.: "Oh, yes." Y. P.: "Feel any worse?" P.: "No, no." Y. P. (decidedly): "Ah; I must change the prescription."

* * *

"HERE lies the body of Mary Ann Lowder,
Who died of drinking a seidlitz powder;
She entered into her heavenly rest
Through drinking it before it effervesced."

* * *

A GENTLEMAN stepped into the Wright House, in Parkesburg, the other day, and, having time before the train was due, threw his overcoat in the window, and asked a young man sitting close by to keep an eye on it till he would go up and get some supper. "Certainly," was the reply. When he came back, the young man had changed positions, and attached to the coat was a card on which was written, "Don't Touch It; This Man Has Just Had the Small-pox."

* * *

MRS. IKELSTEIN: "Ron mit der doctor, kervick, Solomon; the paby ish swollowt a silver tollar!" Mr. I.: "Vos it dot von I lefd on der dable?" Mrs. I.: "Yes, dat vas it; hurry mit der doctor." Mr. I.: "Don'd get oxcited, Rajel, id vos gounderveid."

* * *

A MODERN Mrs. Caudle finds that the following, if repeated rapidly and correctly by her husband after a Masonic gathering, is a certain test that he is perfectly sober: "Hawkshaw of Warsaw sang 'See-saw' as he gathered up shells by the seashore."

A DRUGGIST is not inappropriately termed the pill-ar of society.

* * *

STIGGINGS, jokingly says *Texas Siftings*, married his type-writing girl. Before they were married, he was in the habit of dictating to her; but after marriage she dictated to him, and very successfully too.

* * *

THE young man with a slender salary should choose for his bride a young woman of small waste.

* * *

"Yes," said the chairman, sadly, "our temperance meeting last night would have been more successful if the lecturer hadn't been so absent-minded." "What did he do?" "He tried to blow the foam from a glass of water."

* * *

AN INFALLIBLE REMEDY.

SHE had suffered with the phthisic, and had taken tons of physic,
And whole barrelsful of bitters, and whole loads of nauseous pills,
She'd been troubled with miasma, and all choked up with the asthma,
And been shaken for a month or two with ague and the chills;
She had the yellow fever, of which nothing could relieve her,
And the rheumatism lamed her so she could not go about;
And she groaned with tonsillitis and the most acute bronchitis,
And she suffered endless tortures from the twinges of the gout.
She had tried old-school physicians, "Christian scientists," magicians.
Indian doctors, electricians, and magnetic healers all,
And drank tons of nauseous liquor, but grew ever sick and sicker,
And they got the undertaker to prepare her shroud and pall.
Then great auction sales of laces, advertised in various places,
Caught her feverish eye one morning—and she leaped up sound and well!
She shook off death's stiffening rigour, and with most emphatic vigour
She grabbed her husband's pocket-book, and rushed down town pell-mell.

Yankee Blade.

* * *

TOO MUCH INTEREST IN MEDICAL EXHIBITS.—During the recent meeting of the International Medical Congress, a reporter of one of the Washington dailies was instructed to get a list of the various exhibits. The first exhibit he encountered was a tremendous crowd of people around a little defenceless urn containing cocoa, which was being passed around in liliputian cups. "Are you a doctor?" asked the gentleman in charge. The reporter admitted that he wasn't, but he had an uncle who was. This entitled the reporter to a cup of cocoa, which he took in one small-sized convulsive swallow with great gusto. Passing a man with the prettiest, most tastily decorated stomach-pump it had ever been his privilege to gaze upon, the reporter reached the pepsin stand, where he took enough pepsin to enable him to digest the cocoa. A small sample of cod-liver oil was presented and taken as a preventive for consumption. Everybody was cordial and free-hearted, and the reporter's gastric apparatus was treated to some remedy for heart trouble for a change. Up to the time he stopped keeping count he charged his alimentary canal with a box of baby food, seven different kinds of tonic, any one of which was warranted to make your hair curl, two glasses of orange wine, and a dose of bromo-caffeine. He also took a look through a microscope, and a couple of electric shocks. It was five o'clock in the afternoon when a man, who called himself a "Reppershentative Zhurnalist," was found groping wildly about the hall. "Anything we can show you?" asked one of the affable exhibitors. "Yesshir; show me zher man ash got the stomich pump."

"ELECTRICITY IS LIFE."
(TRADE MARK.)

PULVERMACHER'S
WORLD-FAMED
GALVANIC BELTS,

FOR the CURE of NERVOUS DISEASES.
HAVE RECEIVED TESTIMONIALS from
THREE PHYSICIANS to
HER MAJESTY the QUEEN,
THE ACADÉMIE DE MÉDECINE of Paris and
FORTY MEMBERS of the
ROYAL COLLEGE of PHYSICIANS of LONDON.

RECENT TESTIMONIALS.

GALVANISM *v.* DIFFICULTY OF BREATHING and SLUGGISH CIRCULATION.
Windsor-street, Liverpool, 20th November, 1888.
Dear Sirs,—I am happy to tell you that the benefit so far derived from your treatment has by far exceeded my expectations. My respiration is easier, my circulation has greatly improved, and I now feel very cheerful. The respiration has wonderfully improved, and I am confident that I shall owe my complete recovery to your grand invention.—Yours very truly,
M. FAUKE.
Messrs. Pulvermacher & Co., 194, Regent-street, W.

GALVANISM *v.* INDIGESTION and NERVOUS DEBILITY.
Spofforth, Wetherby, 19th November, 1888.
Sir,—I have received great benefit from wearing your Galvanic Belt. My digestion is better, and I have gained strength and weight. I shall have much pleasure in recommending your treatment to any one who may be suffering like myself,—Yours respectfully,
W. SEAVERS.
Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher, 194, Regent-street, W.

GALVANISM *v.* RHEUMATISM.
Vicarage-street, Nuneaton, 15th November, 1888.
Dear Sir,—Before I purchased your Galvanic Belt I had been six weeks at home, and could not walk. But after wearing your 40s. Belt for Rheumatism I began to get gradually better, and in a few weeks I could walk round the house as I never thought I should again, and the pain left me so that I could go to work.—Yours faithfully,
T. SMITH.
Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher, 194, Regent-street, W.

GALVANISM *v.* SCIATICA.
Cleator Moor, Whitehaven, 13th November, 1888.
Gentlemen,—I am happy to inform you that since wearing your Galvanic Belt the sciatica is so much better that I have now no need to wear the appliance.—Yours truly,
J. NEESHAM.
Messrs. Pulvermacher & Co., 194, Regent-street, W.

GALVANISM *v.* NERVOUS EXHAUSTION.
St. Peter-street, Ipswich, October 29th, 1888.
Dear Mr. Pulvermacher,—I have just received a very gratifying letter from a lady patient who, under my advice, adopted your treatment. For years past this lady has devoted her life to the management of a large orphanage, but owing to the severe mental strain and anxiety connected with it her health quite broke down, and she was unable to attend to her duties.
She now writes to me: "I am truly thankful to tell, and I know you will be glad to hear, that I have derived great benefit from the Pulvermacher Belts you sent me, so much so that I have been able to take up my full work again, and even to add to it, by the opening of a new branch home for the children."—Yours very sincerely,
ROBERT SEAGER.
J. L. Pulvermacher, Esq., 194, Regent-street, W.

GALVANISM *v.* RHEUMATISM.
Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, Oct. 27th, 1888.
Dear Sir,—I want you to send me a Galvanic Belt for a friend, and, with regard to my own case, I may mention that on the arrival of the Combined Band, on Friday, the 12th inst., I had it immediately applied as directed, with the astonishing and comfortable result that the following morning my rheumatism was gone, and I have not felt anything of it since.—Very gratefully yours,
THOMAS GRANT.
Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher, 194, Regent-street, W.

GALVANISM *v.* NERVOUS EXHAUSTION.
Sandy-street, Newry, 25th October, 1888.
Gentlemen,—I am happy to tell you that I am now quite restored to my usual health and strength, thanks to your Galvanic Appliances.—Yours sincerely,
J. TAYLOR.
Messrs. Pulvermacher & Co., 194, Regent-street, W.

GALVANISM *v.* NERVOUS EXHAUSTION.
The distressing symptoms of Nervous Exhaustion and Debility are speedily removed by means of PULVERMACHER'S world-famed GALVANIC BELTS, which are so arranged as to convey a powerful electric current direct to the affected parts, gradually stimulating and strengthening all the nerves and muscles, and speedily arresting all symptoms of waste and decay.

ADVICE PERSONALLY or by LETTER, free of charge.

FOR FURTHER TESTIMONIALS, both Medical and Private, see new Pamphlet, "GALVANISM: NATURE'S CHIEF RESTORER OF IMPAIRED VITAL ENERGY," post free on application to

J. L. PULVERMACHER AND CO.,
GALVANIC ESTABLISHMENT,
194, REGENT-STREET, LONDON, W.
(ESTABLISHED OVER FORTY YEARS.)

Our Letter-Box

"Conference [maketh] a ready man."—*Bacon.*

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All Communications for the Editorial Department (including Books for Review, Specimens of Sanitary Appliances, &c.), to be addressed to "THE EDITOR OF HEALTH," 2, PATERNOSTER-SQUARE, LONDON, E.C. *Those intended for the Publishing Office to be sent to* MR. A. P. WATT, THE PUBLISHER, *at the same address.*

RULES FOR CORRESPONDENTS.

OWING to the mass of letters which reaches us each week, we respectfully direct the attention of Correspondents, desiring replies in the LETTER-BOX DEPARTMENT of HEALTH, to the following rules:—

1. All questions are answered free of charge in the columns of HEALTH. A limited space only, is available for the insertion of replies each week.
2. All letters must be legibly addressed to "The Editor of HEALTH, 2, Paternoster-square, London, E.C.," *and to no other address.*
3. Questions to which answers are desired by post, are so replied to solely at the Editor's discretion. If no answer is sent by post, the query will be replied to in the "Letter-Box" columns of HEALTH. A stamped addressed envelope must accompany all queries to which a private reply is desired.
4. Addresses of physicians and surgeons will, as heretofore, be forwarded FREE to Correspondents on their enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply.
5. Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only, and to make their inquiries as brief as may be consistent with clearness.
6. From the necessity of sending HEALTH to press early in the week, no Correspondent can be replied to in the "Letter-Box" columns in the same week in which the inquiry is received. Replies crushed out of any issue will be found in the succeeding number.
7. No Post Cards must be used in sending queries. Violation of this rule deprives the sender of the privilege of a reply.

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

REPLIES: GENERAL, SANITARY, AND MEDICAL.

[Readers of HEALTH will kindly note that when back numbers of the journal are desired, the letters containing such requests and stamps for the numbers should be addressed to the PUBLISHER of HEALTH, 2, Paternoster-square, London, E.C., and *not to the Editor.*]

NOTICE.—Owing to the pressure of space in the present Christmas issue of HEALTH, several replies to correspondents are held over, these delayed replies will be given in our next number.

OMEGA.—1. Raw lean beef or other raw meats are apt to induce parasitism. There is no advantage in raw beef, and some danger. 2. Cod fish is nutritious taken with butter sauce. 3. Yes.

JOHN THOMPSON.—There is nothing wrong with you,—only a quack would tell you that you had any ailment,—and all you require is to regulate wisely and well your general health. To this end, read the pamphlet, "A Lecture to Young Men" (post free, for 1s. 1d., from Mr. Renshaw, 356, Strand, London, W.C.), and note what is said therein about rules for health and for taking tonics.

DAVID JONES.—If you don't read HEALTH it is evident you cannot benefit from any replies given in our pages. See and follow advice given to "John Thompson" above.

RAGS.—Such appearances are natural to many persons, and are often the result of weariness or nervous exhaustion. Take the Syrup of the Hypophosphites for a time, as ordered in the pamphlet, as a tonic measure; and apply a lotion of one part Hazeline added to two parts water, twice or thrice daily.

P. B. F.—Our advice to you is to wear the woollen underclothing of Mr. Forsyth, 13 & 17, Renfield-street, Glasgow. For full notice of the merits of this clothing, see HEALTH, No. 295. It is pure, undyed, warm, light, and of moderate price.

AJAX.—1. Read the pamphlet recommended above to "John Thompson" and you will find the fullest information given therein. 2. For the hair, see and follow advice given to "C. C. C." in HEALTH No. 295.

THE VERDICT OF A WELL-KNOWN AUTHOR.

THE Rev. Bailey J. Harker, of Bolton, Lancashire, author of *Rambles in Upper Wharfedale, Philip Neville of Garriton,* and other works, writes as follows: "For many years I have been in very indifferent health, crippling me in my public duties as a minister, and interfering with my literary pursuits. For a long time I seemed to suffer chiefly from a nervous affection, and from valvular disease of the heart, and was under the necessity, fourteen years ago, of retiring for two years into the country for the benefit of bracing air, rest, and quietude. After resuming work, however, at the end of that period, though much improved, I was still far from strong, and my memory was considerably impaired. Life under such conditions was almost unbearable. One day one of your books came into my possession, and after reading it I determined to try 'Warner's SAFE Cure.' On the second day after taking the medicine, I became exceedingly worse, but thinking it was owing to the effective action of the remedy, I persevered, and on the third day was surprised to find a great change for the better, and by the time I had finished a few bottles the pain had ceased, the swelling had gone, the veins were reduced to their proper size, and all the discolourment had disappeared from the skin. Strength came back into my legs and feet, and I felt myself another man."

Warner's SAFE Cure can be had at all Chemists and Medicine Vendors in the United Kingdom at 4s. 6d. per bottle, or of H. H. Warner & Co., 86, Clerkenwell-road, London, E.C.

BOURNEMOUTH.—Your remedy is fresh air and plenty of it, plain food, avoidance of alcohol, and of all mental excitement especially; and, finally, the following out of the rules for diet and cure of constipation given in the pamphlet you have read. Take a teaspoonful of Syrup of the Hypophosphites in a wineglass of water, twice daily, after meals. This will brace you up.

VERITAS.—1. Keep the wound very clean, and apply a little carbolic oil to it, of the strength one to forty, on a little lint. Cut off the hair around the wound. 2. We do not understand your second query, but, if we are not mistaken in the name you give, the drug is one used for astringent purposes. 3. No.

SNAPDRAGON.—Probably the slight operation indicated would relieve you. If there is any actual sore or abrasion in the canal, a surgeon alone can cure this after examining you; but possibly by your drinking freely of Vichy or Pitkeathly Water and avoiding all alcohol, your troubles will be cured. What you complain of often depends on an acid state of the secretions.

GLOVER.—Take a hot bath at bedtime occasionally, and after bathing rub St. Jacob's Oil well into your affected joints. Internally, take twenty grains bromide of potash, in water, at bedtime, when your ailment troubles you. Avoid alcohol, and drink freely of the Pitkeathly Water (advertised in our pages), using the Water as combined with Lithia.

SWEET SEVENTEEN.—Wash the parts regularly with Bayley's Spermaceti Soap and tepid water, and apply thereafter a little boracic ointment. If not cured, write again.

ALEXIA.—We should recommend you to trust to warm underclothing (Forsyth's, 17, Renfield-street, Glasgow), and to taking plenty of fatty foods. A dessertspoonful of Thomson's Cod Liver Oil Cream (Dublin-street, Edinburgh) should be taken after meals as both a nutrient and tonic.

TRIED DOCTOR.—Allow one of Burroughs, Wellcome & Co.'s Tabloids of Chlorate of Potash and Borax to dissolve in your mouth occasionally, and clothe warmly in Forsyth's Underclothing (13 & 17, Renfield-street, Glasgow); also take after meals a dessertspoonful of Thomson's Cod Oil Cream (advertised in our pages), and inhale at bedtime the vapour of a little "Sanitas" Fluid added to a pint of very hot water.

SANGUINE.—Apply to Messrs. Burroughs, Wellcome & Co., Snow-hill, London, E.C., for a suitable medicine-chest; and as to the case of the boy, we think you should not in any way be anxious. It is probable you will find the voyage will brace him up and relieve all his symptoms.

HYDRO.—1. If you send stamped addressed envelope in accordance with our rules to correspondents, we will send you address of a London specialist. 2. We have no faith in the treatment you name.

HEADACHE.—We advise you to take a teaspoonful of Easton's Syrup, in a wineglass of water, twice daily, after your meals, and be careful as to your diet. If not cured, write again.

CYBIL. — Messrs. Pulvermacher, 194, Regent-street, London, W., will give you all necessary information regarding electric belts. Write to this firm direct.

VALIDA.—Try the effect of hot hip-baths taken at night, along with the bromide of potash, as recommended to "Glover" in the present number of HEALTH, and if not bettered, write again, giving fuller particulars of health, diet, habits, &c.

FER BRAVAIS. — 1. The chief counter-indications are acidity and constipation. 2. Six weeks are certainly more than enough wherein to experience benefit if the tonic is suitable.

SAVONAROLA.—As a rule, hairdressers are as ignorant regarding the hair and its troubles as the public themselves. Try the lotion recommended to "C. C. C." in HEALTH, No. 295, and note the other directions therein indicated for the hair. If not cured, write again.

J. JACKSON.—Continue to exercise great cleanliness, and look to your underclothing. The application of a little common mercurial (or blue) ointment at night for a few nights will relieve you.

VEXED ONE.—There is nothing abnormal or unnatural in your case, and there is no need for you to have any "anguish of mind" at all. Simply attend to your general health, bathe the parts with cold water, night and morning, and wear a suspensory bandage for a time. Of course, you should bear in mind that unless you utterly renounce the habit you mention you cannot expect to recover your tone. Exert your moral strength, and all will be well.

DOUBTFUL. — Take a hot hip-bath at bedtime, and continue the bromide of potash so long as the pain continues. The use of a good liniment is also to be recommended. Rub carefully over the seat of pain a little chloroform liniment, morning and night; or you might try the simpler plan of applying a hot flannel cloth wrung out of hot water and sprinkled with turpentine. If not cured, write again soon, but give fuller particulars of age, health, habits, food, &c.

DOUR.—All information will be found in the pamphlet recommended to "John Thompson" in the present number. Follow out the advice regarding diet and the use of Cascara Cordial given therein, and you will recover your tone. The pamphlet will also afford you valuable information on the other points to which you refer.

SLAVE.—Try the effect of taking twenty grains bromide of potash in a wineglass of water when your craving is present. But your real remedy must consist in moral and mental control, and in keeping mind and body well occupied. In place of your usual stimulant, take a wineglass of Vin Mariani (Roberts & Co., New Bond-street, London, W., or any good druggist) before or after your meals, and you will find this tonic to assist you in moderating your depression. Write again, by all means, if not cured. Give up the use of your present stimulant entirely,—this is a fixed condition of your cure.

H. BARWELL.—You should use home-made yeast in preference to the other. There is no truth in the idea that goître arises from the use of yeast in any form. The disease in question is produced by excess of minerals in water.

IVOR.—Wash the parts with Naphthol Soap regularly night and morning, and after washing dust upon them a little of Woolley's Sanitary Rose Powder. Of course, you must change your undergarments frequently.

F. BROWN.—Wear very large and roomy boots, and cover the bunion with soap-plaster spread on kid or wash-leather. A good lotion is that made by adding two drachms tincture of arnica to eight ounces of water. This lotion should be applied on lint, covered with oiled silk to prevent the lotion from evaporating, and should be continued for two or three days at a time. The tincture of veratrum viride painted on a bunion, if inflamed, may do much good. If the first of the above remedies does not do good, then try the others in turn.

FAIRFAX (Leeds).—We are afraid there is no remedy in your case, save the mental one of self-control. You are constitutionally nervous, and you can only "grow out" of your excitement through educating yourself to take things more quietly and calmly than you do at present. The foundation of all success, however, lies in your maintaining a high standard of general health, so that you should guard rigidly against any disturbance of your health. Mixing freely in society is also to be recommended.

Nervousness

Horsford's Acid Phosphate,

A NERVE FOOD.

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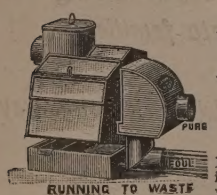

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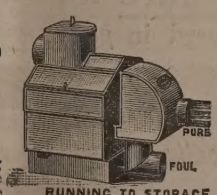

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